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REORGANIZING U.S. DEFENSE PLANNING TO DEAL WITH
NEW CONTINGENCIES: U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT IN THE THIRD WORLD

Kevin N. Lewis

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PREFACE

In this paper, I discuss how U.S. defense planning might be reorganized to contend with direct Soviet military intervention in regions that have fallen outside the scope of our major defense commitments in the past.[1] To limit the analysis, this paper will address only those situations in which U.S. and Soviet forces are or may become involved in an armed confrontation. For my purposes here, "third world" excludes areas covered by existing U.S. defense arrangements (i.e., all of NATO and Northeast Asia), and the People's Republic of China.[2] Finally, I will restrict this discussion to broad points and will not review important but more technical debates now percolating in public and official defense forums.[3] The aim of this paper is to

[1] By "intervention," I mean the introduction of a significant number of combat and support forces (mainly ground forces) into a location where there had been no comparable deployment. According to this definition, the Soviet invasion of Hungary was an "intervention," whereas the suppression by Soviet military forces of riots in East Germany in 1953 was not. Soviet "direct military intervention" further implies large-scale deployment of Soviet combat forces (as opposed to, say, the introduction of a mix of Soviet support elements and Cuban combat troops).

[2] Korean defense has been a traditional planning scenario and is not representative of the majority of defense planning problems the United States would encounter in the developing world. Turkey is a special case in point: although part of NATO, there are precedents for non-NATO Turkish defense possibilities (recall the June 1964 "Johnson letter"). Similarly, Soviet retaliation for bilateral U.S.-Turkish operations might not be responded to by NATO. However, Turkey is now fully within the Western Bloc, and again does not represent a novel planning problem. Finally, purely naval engagements could in some sense be described as "third world conflicts," depending on where fighting occurs--but this paper does not consider uniquely naval actions.

[3] Some of these debates concern the advantages of alternative anti-armor options (helicopters vs. tracked vehicles, light as opposed to heavy mechanized forces, etc.), requirements for forcible entry and administrative landing capabilities, naval gunfire support, and command relationships (such as the need for a "Fifth Fleet").

describe overall classes of threats and options to identify conceptual, unifying themes that can guide defense planning for a range of third-world contingencies. This paper will ask, in other words, what the overarching determinants of a U.S. policy for countering Soviet aggression in the third world should be, and, given competing defense requirements, how we should decide which threats are the most important ones to hedge against.

Given the novelty of such contingencies, it will not come as a surprise that planning for a new species of threats and aims will be most difficult. To be sure, a direct U.S.-Soviet third-world conflict would pose grave yet unfamiliar escalatory risks.[4] In addition, successful planning for such eventualities must overcome possibly great political and military impediments. In light of these and other complications, U.S. defense planning should consider fundamental changes that allow for more effective response in new types of third-world conflict scenarios.

This essay was prepared for publication in a volume of papers presented at a conference on "Military Intervention in the Third World: U.S. Policy Options for the 1980s." The symposium was sponsored by the Foreign Policy Research Institute and was held in Washington, D.C., on 14 December 1981.

[4] U.S. forces have directly engaged Soviet ones only once, in Siberia in 1919.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
Section	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. INTERVENTION IN THE U.S. DEFENSE PLANNING CONTEXT	5
U.S. Planning for Third-Area Intervention: A Brief History	5
Consistent Themes in U.S. Defense and Intervention Planning	13
Limited War: A Growing Disconnection Between Means and Interests	16
Responding to New Strategic Necessities	21
III. THE NATURE OF THE SOVIET DIRECT INTERVENTION THREAT	23
Patterns of Soviet Interventionist Conduct in the Third World	23
Changes in the Intervention Context and Implications for U.S. Defense Planning in the 1980s	31
The Nature of Possible Soviet Interventionist Options	38
IV. U.S. DEFENSE POLICY OPTIONS	45
U.S. Defense Priorities	45
Defending Southwest Asia Against Soviet Intervention	49
Reorganizing U.S. Defense for a Persian Gulf Contingency .	53
Alternatives to In-Theater Prepositioning	56
Contributions from Friends and Allies	59
U.S. Deterrent Policy for Southwest Asia	61
Responding to Soviet Intervention in Other Cases	64

I. INTRODUCTION

At the close of World War II, the United States inherited a formidable set of global interests and defense responsibilities. Despite the worldwide nature of those commitments, however, U.S. planning for conventional land and air conflict has been attempted on a theater-by-theater basis--with NATO the undisputed driver of force structure and strategy planning. In other force-planning areas (such as strategic mobility and logistics), "go anywhere" and "flexibility" have been the watchwords, but in reality, the same few major contingencies have shaped our planning efforts. In contrast, planning for other forces (naval and strategic nuclear) has been based on what might be called a "seamless," worldwide theater, bound neither by geography nor the usual land warfare contingencies.[1]

Such diverse planning enterprises, especially those related to the primary general-purpose force (GPF) planning scenarios, have proceeded in parallel since the 1950s, despite repeated warnings posed by occasional, so-called "non-canonical" emergencies, that this approach may not be universally valid. But because of the primacy of the large, sudden, European land-war scenario in U.S. GPF planning, the customarily long start-up time of many third-area contingencies, and the chronic inability or unwillingness of the Soviet Union to project direct military power much beyond its own frontiers, serious planning for specific contingencies in which the armed forces of the U.S. and USSR

[1] For an authoritative historical review of U.S. general-purpose force planning, see William W. Kaufmann, Planning Conventional Forces, 1950-1980, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1982.

come into direct conflict in the third world has not taken place over the past three decades.

Over the last several years, however, several factors have combined to suggest that a national security policy that overlooks this possibility may not be a very prudent one. As evidenced by its invasion of Afghanistan, its skillful use of proxies, and its support of allies in many other locations, the USSR has slowly but determinedly expanded its military options in regions far beyond its traditional immediate geostrategic sphere of influence. At the same time, U.S. defense responsibilities have become more numerous and demanding. The alliance and other mutual security structures by which some remote Western interests were to have been guarded have steadily deteriorated. Moreover, recent political trends and technological developments have increased the potential for sudden, unpredictable outbreaks of violence in virtually any part of the world. And it can be fairly said that U.S. investment in defense preparedness over the past decade and a half has not been adequate to keep pace with new, more stringent requirements (or even to compensate for the erosion of the U.S. defense capital stock).

Consequently, the U.S. defense establishment has recently shown great interest in modifying or expanding our strategy, force structure, and operational plans to include a scenario in which the U.S. and USSR come into direct armed conflict in those third-world regions that have not so far been emphasized in our security deliberations. Although such confrontations do not now seem to warrant the budgetary and strategic priority of more traditional American defense undertakings, it is still alarmingly easy to postulate a range of scenarios in which primary U.S. objectives could be at stake and in which the ability of the U.S. and

its allies to cope with possible attacks may not be sufficient--unless different kinds of military capabilities are included in the overall GPF posture before fighting starts. Even in less dire circumstances in which expensive force structure adaptations may not be needed, considerable modification of policies, operational practices, and deployment patterns will be necessary to effectively bring U.S. power to bear in defeating lesser Soviet challenges in the developing world.

Before proceeding I will outline a few assumptions on which the following discussion is based. A direct U.S.-Soviet military showdown is probably not the most likely threat confronting the U.S. in the third world: security problems arising from local political fulminations, Soviet-inspired insurgency, and their use of proxy forces pose a more immediate and insidious threat. In addition, and while this analysis concentrates only on the question of third-world general-purpose force scenarios, the military components of such a superpower confrontation cannot be separated from the very broad spectrum of political, economic, subversive, and paramilitary actions that would certainly accompany a local shooting conflict.

It should be kept in mind that a U.S.-Soviet stand-off represents a particularly dangerous situation, for several reasons. Here, the global interests of the two superpowers and their nuclear capabilities are especially important. Even if a crisis does not lead to conflict, plans for and threats to use intervention forces could swiftly lead to serious repercussions for alliances on both sides, their worldwide influence and prestige, and domestic political and economic situations.[2] Therefore, this possibility must not be viewed apart from other defense and foreign

[2] And even if we are prevailing in a conflict, we may be suffering economic consequences, which would undoubtedly shape U.S. planning to a degree commensurate with military considerations.

policy options; in fact, these considerations may even dominate the immediate military problem.

The overarching determinant of this problem--the linkage of local conventional defense with worldwide military capabilities--remains the great unknown. The risk that a third-world conflict might expand to global proportions or even lead to a nuclear conflict will be a paramount concern to defense planners on both sides. Because they are treated by other authors and are of a speculative nature beyond the scope of this short assessment, these topics are reviewed only in passing. The reader should, however, continually recall their importance.

Key issues for this analysis, then, include: (1) the interests over which such a conflict might begin; (2) the possible forms such a conflict could take; and (3) the relevance of this new "class" of scenarios to overall U.S. defense options. Section II examines how U.S. third-world intervention contingencies have figured in overall defense planning and how that planning must change with the introduction of a direct Soviet military threat.[3] Section III reviews the changing Soviet threat and the nature of possible new threats the U.S. and its allies might face. In Section IV, I consider the implications of this military threat for current U.S. defense choices, the nature of the forces and budgets responsive strategies require, burden-sharing possibilities and other alternatives, and changes that must be made in our defense establishment to support these expanded U.S. requirements.

[3] We can, of course, distinguish between planning for intervention and planning to defeat intervention. But because of contextual ambiguities and because the planning problems in each case are so similar, throughout this paper I use the term "intervention" to refer to both intervention and counterintervention forces and capabilities.

II. INTERVENTION IN THE U.S. DEFENSE PLANNING CONTEXT

In designing policy and forces for responding to Soviet third-area intervention, we must take care to cast our plans within the broad U.S. defense planning context. Western forces established to counter such aggression cannot, of course, be isolated from other defense capabilities, nor can the threats posed by the USSR in the third world be insulated from those in other regions (even those that include the risk of a nuclear war). Nonetheless, experience with the third-area intervention problem has shown that it is possible to derive some important lessons about the relationship between regional intervention potential and other capabilities. Thus, it is instructive to begin with a brief review of overall U.S. defense concepts in the past with regard to third-area responsibilities in which a Soviet intervention threat has existed.

U.S. PLANNING FOR THIRD-AREA INTERVENTION: A BRIEF HISTORY

With the announcement of the "Truman Doctrine" in March 1947, U.S. general-purpose force planning throughout the 1950s was generally in accord with the policies of containment and massive nuclear retaliation. Although the need for conventional military capability was widely acknowledged, budget restrictions foiled efforts to devise credible, worldwide conventional deterrent forces.[1] In lieu of a countervailing

[1] The United States considered or undertook several efforts to rebuild a solid conventional defense. Plans to do so were enunciated in NATO's Lisbon Plan and in the NSC-68 strategy guidance. Even so, these and other attempts came to nothing. For a discussion of the tactical doctrine underlying Army force sizing in this era, see R. Doughty, "The Evolution of U.S. Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76," Leavenworth Paper Number One, U.S. Army CGSC Combat Studies Institute, August 1979, pp. 2-18.

force to the allegedly invincible Red Army, the U.S. relied on a number of expedients. Chief among these was the threatened use of nuclear weapons to handle unmanageable GPF contingencies in any location. To this end, the U.S. procured not only a large central nuclear force but a significant land- and sea-based tactical nuclear capability. To contain the USSR at its borders, the United States also concluded treaties and mutual security arrangements with some 40 nations, including many non-Communist states on the Sino-Soviet periphery.[2]

It was not clear at the time that these individual provisions could have defeated Soviet regional attacks on a case by case basis; however, linking the U.S. nuclear deterrent with our worldwide security commitments did seem to have persuaded Soviet leaders that a local confrontation might escalate to global and fatal dimensions. In any event, the U.S. retained a substantial mobilization base from World War II (in the form of its industrial potential, large manpower reserves, and a modern 1,000 to 1,100 ship fleet). Taking into account Soviet ground force reductions after 1955, the recuperation of U.S. allies, the relative Soviet reluctance to become involved in the third world until 1956, and demonstrated Soviet military deficiencies,[3] it is by no

[2] For discussions on contemporary diplomatic and nuclear strategy, see John Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar Defense Policy, Oxford University Press, New York, 1982, and George Quester, Nuclear Diplomacy: The First Twenty-Five Years, Dunellen, New York, 1970. It is essential to recall that other Western powers maintained significant security commitments in the third world. However, the British withdrew "East of Suez" in 1971 and the French pulled out of Southeast Asia and Algeria (although they do continue to support African and Indian Ocean deployments).

[3] See B. Blechman, Sizing Up the Soviet Army, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1975, pp. 3-5. In particular, Stalin was opposed to third world adventures pending Soviet recovery from the "Great Patriotic War."

means apparent that the U.S. and its allies could not have mustered an adequate, if not timely, counterinterventionary force. For the most part, adroit use of clandestine and paramilitary capabilities by each side accounted for the bulk of U.S.-Soviet military competition in third areas throughout that decade.

In 1961, the Kennedy administration commenced an aggressive program to build up U.S. conventional capabilities. Although a major nuclear modernization was also undertaken, U.S. defense doctrine was revised to rely considerably less on the presumed deterrent power of an all-purpose nuclear capability. Indeed, U.S. GPF planning was based on the so-called "2-1/2 war" policy that required U.S. forces, in conjunction with those of local allies, to be able to simultaneously wage two major conventional wars (in Europe and elsewhere) and conduct yet another, smaller action. Preparations to meet insurgent challenges were given a particularly high priority in the force structure and budget.[4]

Implicit in this doctrine, of course, was the notion that the United States should be ready to handle not only major Communist theater attacks, but also smaller-scale intervention in unidentified third world areas. To meet the latter threat, the U.S. reinforced its forward defense presence, in 1961 created a quick-reaction intervention force (under the aegis of STRICOM),[5] and--later in the 1960s--launched an

[4] See Alain Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, How Much is Enough? Shaping the Defense Program 1961-69, Harper and Row, New York, 1972, especially Chapter Four, and William W. Kaufmann, The McNamara Strategy, Harper and Row, New York, 1964, pp. 98-101.

[5] The Annual DoD Report for FY1963 noted that U.S. military power "did not deter our principal adversaries from a series of less than total aggressions. To meet that danger, the United States in 1961 had established [STRICOM which could] almost instantly send U.S. forces of any size to prevent wars ... and extinguish brushfire hostilities." (p. 244).

ambitious program to acquire strategic mobility assets (including the C-5A jumbo jet and Fast Deployment Logistics ship) needed to rapidly transport U.S. combat troops on short notice to any trouble spot in the world.

Despite interest in third world scenarios, however, U.S. planning for and execution of its operations in Vietnam failed to reflect essential lessons of the counterinsurgency (COIN) curriculum. U.S. operations in Vietnam were, for the most part, a recycled version of Korean operations, which were in turn based on the classic European "big war" model. Viewed from any perspective--campaign aims, unit tactics, weapons design, and even casualty patterns--U.S. operations in Vietnam revolved around NATO-style doctrine and major formations not terribly appropriate to Southeast Asian conditions.[6] Nonetheless, the U.S. defense program seemed successful in its deterrence of direct Soviet intervention in the third world. With only a few exceptions during the Vietnam conflict, the USSR contributed only materiel and technical assistance in its support of local "national liberation" forces.[7]

In contrast to American preparations in the 1950s and 1960s, U.S. planning to intervene or counter Soviet intervention between 1969 and 1980 was considerably reduced. Several factors, including distaste with the Southeast Asian experience, led to a general retrenchment in the

[6] For a comparative discussion and a critique of approaches to COIN, see R.W. Komer's classic accounts, The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort, and Bureaucracy Does its Thing: Institutional Constraints on U.S.-GVN Performance in Vietnam, both Rand Reports, Santa Monica California, respectively, February and August, 1972.

[7] Exceptions include tactical air and air defense support in Yemen, Vietnam, and Egypt. See Section III below for a more detailed account.

capabilities and aims of U.S. general purpose forces--especially those relating to third world contingencies.[8] In 1969, U.S. defense planning guidance was scaled back from the 2-1/2 war capability to a 1-1/2 war one. Programs such as the Fast Deployment Logistics ship fleet were even cancelled on the assumption that they made easier or even encouraged U.S. adventures abroad. In 1972, STRICOM was disbanded and replaced by REDCOM, which was not an intervention force, but a reserve capability to reinforce other unified commands overseas. And in July 1969, with the promulgation of the Nixon (or Guam) Doctrine, the U.S. explicitly dropped its commitment to a large ground presence in support of third world allies.[9]

Thus, through the 1970s, the U.S. generally avoided actions that could have led to a direct conflict, especially a superpower one, in the developing world. U.S. military action overseas was limited to a few, mainly symbolic operations. During this period even the political will to threaten U.S. intervention seemed lacking. Perhaps the zenith of anti-interventionist sentiment in the U.S. came in November 1973, with the Congressional "War Powers Resolution," a law designed chiefly to prevent a U.S. President from responding to an evolving third world contingency with military force.[10]

[8] There were even initiatives, notably the proposed Mansfield amendments, to bring troops back from NATO.

[9] The President's Foreign Policy Report for 1971 notes that "it is our policy that future guerilla and subversive threats will be dealt with primarily by the forces of our allies."

[10] For a description of the Act and its political origins, see B. Craig, "The Power to Make War: Congress' Search for an Effective Role," Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Volume I, Number 3, Spring 1982, pp. 317 ff.

Although strong arguments had been made from roughly 1975 about the need to plan defense operations in third areas[11] (contending that increased regional turmoil, expanded Soviet capabilities, and the apparent intention of the USSR and its clients to provide increasingly more substantial and pivotal aid to local clients and friends required a tangible U.S. response), it took the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 to spark serious official efforts to restore U.S. intervention capabilities and to begin to forge a degree of national consensus on the need to make such provisions, especially for Southwest Asia.[12] In his January 1980 State of the Union address, the President announced, via the Carter Doctrine, that "any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." [13] Note, however, that U.S. policy to repel Soviet intervention in the third world was not limited to the Mideast: the detection of MiG-23s and a Soviet "combat brigade" in Cuba also generated considerable anxiety, and led to the formation of a Caribbean Command.

[11] There had been some concern in the Ford administration; and in its 1977 PRM-10 Worldwide National Security Policy Study, the Carter administration addressed the question in detail.

[12] For an excellent review of the background of the RDF, see Paul Davis, Observations on the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force: Origins, Direction, and Mission, the Rand Corporation, June 1982. Before Afghanistan, of course, trouble in Yemen, the Soviet arms and personnel "discoveries" in Cuba, and outbreaks of anti-Western violence in the Islamic world (including the Hostage seizure) contributed to growing public recognition of the third world security problem. Note that some work had begun on RDF-type capabilities in August 1979, for instance, the Maritime Prepositioning Ship program (MPS).

[13] Smith, T., "President Says U.S. Would Use Military," New York Times, 24 January 1980, p. 1.

Carter administration programs designed to back up such declaratory policy with a credible intervention capability included a striking facsimile of the McNamara mobility initiatives (a bevy of Maritime Prepositioning Ships, CRAF and C-141 enhancements, and the C-X airlifter). In addition, a raft of regional military cooperation arrangements were hastily reached, including access and facilities agreements with Egypt, Kenya, Oman, Somalia, and more recently, Morocco.[14] Facilities on the British atoll Diego Garcia were expanded, and a permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean (centered around one and often two aircraft carriers drawn from the Sixth and Seventh Fleets) was established. Perhaps most important of all was the establishment of a "Rapid Deployment Force" (RDF), to consist of elements of all the armed services (ranging from commando teams to two squadrons of SAC heavy B-52H bombers, called the "Strategic Projection Force"). While concentrating on Persian Gulf scenarios, activities of the RDF were not restricted to that region. Many objections were raised about the tempo and scope of RDF organization, but such a capability was important in that it signified official reversal of the decade-long U.S. unwillingness to face up to the third area intervention scenario.[15]

[14] The U.S. has also conducted a number of joint training exercises, such as Bright Star. The Egyptians were heavily involved, the Omanis much less so.

[15] Among the leading criticisms of the RDF have been: the RDF's use of forces earmarked for other theaters; the makeup of those forces; and the failure to resolve key jurisdictional and command problems among the different services and Unified Command regions of responsibility. For one critique of the RDF, see Jeffrey Record, The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Cambridge Mass, 1981.

With his inauguration in January 1981, President Reagan elected to continue, or in some cases accelerate, initiatives to augment U.S. interventionist capability. Corresponding Reagan administration policy actions included a revision of U.S. planning guidance to "two wars"-- increasing the importance of a major third world (i.e., Southwest Asia) contingency to that of the Korean contingency, and mandating that U.S. planning for a third area contingency should assume that the USSR might be directly involved militarily.[16] Related policy steps taken by his administration included the announcement of a "maritime strategy," increased foreign military aid, and the threat to respond to Soviet attacks in one region by striking points of Soviet weakness elsewhere, a concept known as "horizontal escalation." [17] It has also been recently announced that the RDF, once subordinate to REDCOM, would eventually become an independent, unified command. Although airlift modernization has been marked by confusion and chaos, the maritime prepositioning and fast sealift programs continue more or less apace.[18] Finally, and perhaps most noteworthy, U.S. primary intervention capabilities have been focused explicitly on Southwest Asia. In other words, our RDJTF has become a Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean force, not really a "go anywhere" one.

[16] Note that this latter point had been made earlier by Harold Brown in his FY82 Defense Report.

[17] For an analysis of the horizontal escalation concept, see Kevin N. Lewis and Mark Lorell, Out of Area Escalation: Concepts, Historical Lessons, and Applications, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica California, forthcoming.

[18] It should be noted, however, that funding for airlift spares was approved, and that some delays have been injected into sealift modernization due to a Congressional dispute over "buy vs. convert."

CONSISTENT THEMES IN U.S. DEFENSE AND INTERVENTION PLANNING

Taking the history of such U.S. defense preparations as a whole, a number of consistencies emerge. From a planner's point of view, one thread in particular has run through U.S. defense planning for three decades: the distinction in force, employment, and doctrinal planning between what I will call primary and secondary contingencies.

Planning for primary contingencies has stressed a number of demanding factors. Primary contingencies have generally posed the risk of sudden, even no-notice attacks, and therefore strategy emphasizes readiness, detailed preplanning, large-scale, in-theater deployments, and a rapid reinforcement capability. In short, dedicated, ready, and often highly specialized forces are required for primary contingencies. Because of the size and firepower of the forces that may be involved, the brisk expenditure of equipment and personnel is expected, and some degree of home-front mobilization (up to full generation of war production and large-scale conscription) may be necessary. Furthermore, extensive advance joint provisions with local and other military powers may be concluded.

Because of the interests at stake and the possibility that Allied conventional defenses may be inadequate to support a status quo ante defense objective, primary conventional contingencies have frequently been linked, explicitly or by implication, to our nuclear deterrent; and even if fighting begins or can be contained at a low level of violence, declaratory policy seeks to remind would-be aggressors that control over escalation is not guaranteed. Historically, the leading primary contingencies have been Western Europe and the Far East; gradual U.S.

rapprochement with the People's Republic of China has allowed the Far East contingency to become a less than fully major one, nominally a peripheral action on the Korean peninsula (although expansion of the Soviet Pacific Fleet and Japanese reluctance to increase their defense spending may be reversing this trend).

Secondary contingencies, by tradition if not on the basis of detailed calculations, tend to emphasize a very different set of planning factors. Two subtypes of secondary contingencies can be distinguished. First are those situations in which the U.S. or its allies have fought other nations that lack direct superpower support. Here, as in Vietnam, slower force buildups have usually been the rule; accordingly, in-place, or even in-being forces may not always be needed. Rather, the defense posture is "retooled" or augmented when the need arises.[19] The threats (and usually the contributions from allies) are thought to be less significant, competent, or demanding. Most characteristic is the often unclear political context for these conflicts. Political objectives and strategic aims of many of the participants are fluid and frequently ad hoc. Political alignments tend to be more ambiguous, and world opinion more capricious.

The second subtype of secondary contingency is that in which very small and usually highly specialized forces may be used for some very specific purpose. Recent examples of such actions include the use of special operation teams at Entebbe and Mogadishu, the "Desert One" hostage rescue attempt, in the Falklands fighting, and so on. Because

[19] For instance, the British clearly did not plan in peacetime for the Falklands contingency they confronted. To respond to the Argentine attack required improvised plans and bootstrapped forces. (It may seem peculiar to describe Vietnam, the largest American combat action since World War II, as a secondary contingency. The term "secondary" refers to the planning process, not the scale of the war.)

of training lead times and the fact that elite forces may be required on short notice, special forces are retained under all conditions.[20]

Regardless of which subtype of secondary contingency we are talking about, because critical U.S. interests have apparently not been at stake, troublesome domestic political questions are raised--especially in the wake of Vietnam. Indeed, U.S. willingness to automatically use military force in such situations has never been fully articulated. The Carter Doctrine stops short of such a promise, and Reagan administration declarations continue in this vein.

For better or worse, this dichotomy between primary and secondary contingencies has shaped U.S. defense planning for its conventional forces over the last three decades. Such a distinction has been apparent in: (1) our manpower policy; (2) the relationship of our general-purpose forces with the nuclear forces; (3) the problems inherent in forging a political consensus for each type of contingency; (4) the deployment and readiness of forces for each kind of mission; (5) their relative budgetary priorities; and (6) their equipment, tactical doctrine, and command and planning apparatus. One very important result of this distinction has been that evolutionary change in the U.S. defense planning system (whether it applies to doctrine, force structure, contingency plans, or even the design of individual weapon systems), has come about when that change applies to primary contingencies. In other words, we are only likely to devise and implement useful changes in advance of a shooting conflict when those changes apply to a concrete, ongoing defense problem--in other words, a

[20] Given their small size and great flexibility, these forces do not place any intolerable budgetary or force structure burdens on planners.

primary contingency. True, we have learned some lessons from nonstandard contingencies, especially Vietnam. Indeed, our current concepts on such important subjects as intratheater lift, close air support, and air-to-air combat training were molded directly by our experience in Southeast Asia; but such lessons and our responses to them were, however, reactive, not anticipatory.[21] In addition, the tempo of ongoing fighting and the U.S. interests at stake were such that time for assimilation of results and freedom to experiment did exist.

Until 1978-1979, this two-track approach to defense planning has been the rule; and although the approach may not have been a very efficient one, it did not lead to disaster. Changes in the overall strategic context, brought about by certain trends over the past five years, however, have raised the prospect that continued reliance on this approach to defense planning may place U.S. security interests in considerable jeopardy. What factors now force a new look at our traditional planning process?

LIMITED WAR: A GROWING DISCONNECTION BETWEEN MEANS AND INTERESTS

As Professor Michael Howard once noted, one fights a limited war only when one can afford to lose it. This does not imply that linking conventional force requirements to unlimited escalation should become our basic defense policy. Rather, this statement councils a close proportionality between the importance of the objectives we might pursue in a local conflict and our means of defending those interests.

[21] Distilling the lessons of ongoing fighting (and even unique episodes, such as the "Desert One" fiasco) is a popular but not always useful pastime. However, the Vietnam experience did provide vital lessons that led to current air-to-air combat training programs (like the "Aggressors" or TOP-GUN), and the requirements for the A-10 and AMST aircraft. The Soviets are undoubtedly assimilating a number of lessons as a result of their Afghanistan tenure.

Since the U.S. has no offensive ambitions in any third world region, there may seem no compelling reason to maintain large interventionist forces. But when the possibility exists of outside aggression in a key region, U.S. plans and provisions to defend our interests there must be prompt and responsive. Here, like it or not, deterring that aggression becomes our primary goal. In this regard, it is essential to recall that all relevant historical experience demonstrates that deterrence will be most resilient if there is a high probability that the indicated response or retaliation is consistent with the issues at stake and therefore is a realistic and appropriate option. However, if the actual means for supporting an intended deterrent threat or its rationale are lacking, an enemy may ignore that threat with unfortunate consequences.

U.S. planning for primary and secondary contingencies in the traditional sense has yielded predictable results with respect to our ability to deter and, in turn, to deal with significant limited war challenges. In theaters where the U.S. has prepared for primary contingencies, our security interests are unambiguously critical. Further, rhetoric and admittedly many operational problems aside, we can have considerable confidence in our conventional forces' ability either to defeat enemy attack or raise the costs of attack to the point where it becomes an unattractive option.

In the case of secondary contingencies, however, the story has been different. When a U.S. presence has been lacking, or when the U.S. political stake in a region has been in doubt, adversaries have been more inclined to resort to action, often of an openly military nature.

In an ideal world, we would hedge against all such possible challenges, but we cannot afford to do so in reality. In planning for defense, if our local interests are not vital ones, it is difficult to justify major outlays for military power that could detract from our ability to defend more important regions. Consequently, we have planned historically for a few primary scenarios, hoping that we will not be too unpleasantly surprised when an emergency occurs. (With low probability threats, we may even wait until a conflict develops before making these resource choices.)[22]

Two trends threaten this traditional balancing act with respect to certain key third world locations. First, the military threat in many of these regions has expanded, primarily with the Soviets' improved combat ability and continuing political inclination to underwrite and even become involved in military operations in those areas, but also with the breakdown of traditional checks against attack of any kind in key areas.

Second, our awareness of the importance to the West of certain third world regions has increased. The strategic value of those regions inheres in their supply of raw materials, especially petroleum, on which the Western and Asian industrial economies rely. The United States is heavily dependent on the developing world for energy and other

[22] Once again the British Falklands campaign is the most striking recent example. On another point, some would say that it is possible--by aggregating all global U.S. interests--to tie up regional deterrence under the aegis of deterrence of worldwide, including nuclear, war. The prerequisite for this, however, is that the global military balance be such that the United States can afford to make good on its escalatory threats: and this is an increasingly doubtful proposition. Note that there are a number of U.S. "objectives" that are not region specific--for instance, we may elect as a goal the containment of Soviet expansionism for its own sake, but this should not be a factor in force and other defense planning calculus.

industrial resources; the Western Europeans and Japanese are even more so. For instance, the U.S. imports about half of its oil from the third world, while Germany, France, and Japan are almost entirely dependent on such imports (especially imports from the Persian Gulf).[23] As former Defense Secretary Schlesinger noted: "The fundamental reason for our concern about the Middle East is that the Western world and its industry will continue to be dependent upon access to Middle East oil resources for the foreseeable future. It must have such oil if it is to ... retain its independence." [24] As a result of both these trends, the new third-world "secondary" contingencies seem different in kind from those we have confronted in the past. Economic dependence is certainly no new development--but even occasional incidents (such as the oil embargo of 1973 and the 1977-78 Communist-inspired fighting in Shaba that imperiled cobalt and copper supplies) failed to convince many in the U.S. of the need to provide military insurance against future supply disruptions. The issue has suddenly become a critical one because of the widespread perception of a shift in the overall U.S.-Soviet military balance.

These changes in the global balance are worth reviewing briefly. The Soviets some time ago gained a solid position of nuclear parity with the United States. Consequently, U.S. freedom to protect its interests abroad by the use of nuclear threats seems to have disappeared except perhaps in the case of NATO. Furthermore, the USSR has grown steadily

[23] However, only 7-10% of U.S. oil comes from the Gulf. For the United States, though, the so-called "strategic materials lifeline" is quite vulnerable. See "Special Report: Strategic Materials," Aviation Week and Space Technology, 5 May 1980, pp. 42-67, and J. Orme, "Ore Wars: The Problem of U.S. Dependence on Foreign Materials," The Fletcher Forum, Summer 1982.

[24] James Schlesinger, "The Handwriting on the Wall May be a Forgery," Armed Forces Journal International, March 1982, p. 32.

(albeit slowly) more aggressive in its own willingness to involve itself in areas essential to the West. While U.S. power projection capabilities have held steady or in some cases declined, Soviet capabilities have gained. Not only are key regions readily accessible by land lines of communication (LOCs) to regular Soviet ground forces, but improved lift capability has begun to extend the reach of Soviet expeditionary forces. While the Soviets seem increasingly inclined to resort to or support regional use of military force, traditional Western alliance and regional power structures have collapsed.[25] At the same time, political disarray and turmoil afflict potential conflict regions, with an increasing number of nations resorting to offensive action or (some of them, like Argentina and Iran, quite unlikely ones) even liaison with the USSR to deal with their local problems. Finally, a broad array of new logistical, political, military, and geographic problems pertinent to many third world scenarios (for instance, harsh terrain and the difficulty of defending petrocomplexes) compound the difficulty of making sound defense preparations.

Thus, the changing character of the ongoing U.S.-Soviet military competition and the "new" third world strategic problem now force a close look at the question of defeating direct Soviet aggression in essential third world areas. There are obviously many ways to respond to these overall trends. Just as all threats occasioned by these trends need not involve armed aggression, methods of handling them need not all

[25] More and more this includes polarization in NATO over third area security requirements and trade. (For example, the French have made inroads with aircraft sales in the Mideast partially as a result of their political position on Arab-Israeli questions. See John Newhouse, "A Sporty Game, Part I, The New Yorker, 6 June 1982, pp. 48-105, for one example.) The most dramatic political example, of course, is the denial of staging and overflight rights for U.S. planes during the 1973 Mideast airlift.

be military in nature. Moreover, not all U.S. and Soviet third world interests are diametrically opposed. However, there is no doubt that potentially substantial military problems remain. Because that is so, we must think through (and implement) the determinants of third world contingency planning for combat scenarios in which the USSR may be directly involved.

RESPONDING TO NEW STRATEGIC NECESSITIES

With the emergence of new threats of large-scale and sudden military aggression in third world areas where crucial Western interests are at stake, historic U.S. defense planning practices may no longer be the best ones. As we shall see in detail below, the primary/secondary contingency distinction may foil U.S. planning for a new class of intervention scenarios that do not now (and probably can never) enjoy the doctrinal status of a primary contingency, but for which the traditional lack of preparation and slow pace of intervention do not apply. Indeed, the possibility of a range of third area contingencies that nonetheless gravely threaten essential national interests has, I propose, been so difficult to hedge against because from a planning point of view it violates the traditional segregation of primary fights and sideshows.[26] Accordingly, the need to provide a peacetime intervention capability on a par with traditional U.S. primary defense contingencies breaches the historical distinction between the two and demands a new approach to our global assessment of defense needs.

[26] Generally, U.S. third world intervention capabilities have been viewed as secondary contingencies. True, the Vietnam commitment at its height ran to about 650,000 men, and SEA-related expenditures at their peak represented about a third of the DoD budget. However, these forces were more or less added to the existing U.S. posture in relatively digestible increments and therefore did not detract catastrophically from U.S. commitments elsewhere. For instance, U.S. ground force division equivalents not devoted to South Vietnam numbered 29 in 1964, 23 in 1968, and 28-2/3 in 1980.

In sum, not only has it become difficult to design an intervention force, it is also increasingly possible that that force may have to pit itself against Soviet-backed forces, or even Soviet forces themselves. The question of contending with proxies has been discussed in great detail by other authors. From a defense planner's perspective, then, two related questions are particularly urgent. First, what risks above and beyond those that apply to any kind of intervention planning are posed by the direct participation of Soviet forces? Second, what options are open to the U.S. should the need to deter Soviet intervention arise; what factors constrain U.S. freedom to plan for such contingencies; and how should these efforts relate to other defense requirements that compete for scarce defense dollars?

III. THE NATURE OF THE SOVIET DIRECT INTERVENTION THREAT

In view of the Soviets' recent aggressive actions, their improved power projection capabilities, and continuing turmoil in regions of great importance to the United States, a good case can be made for immediate (and depending on the scope of the response, possibly very expensive) U.S. military and political action to enhance Western defense options. Before committing ourselves to a particular set of programs, however, we must first understand the (1) possible Soviet rationales for intervening militarily in the third world; (2) forms that major Soviet military intervention could take; and (3) factors that should shape U.S. planning for and response to Soviet attack. Since past Soviet intervention practice proves a startlingly consistent guidebook for these analyses, a quick review of Soviet interventionist conduct is a good starting point.

PATTERNS OF SOVIET INTERVENTIONIST CONDUCT IN THE THIRD WORLD

What are the political and military conditions that promote (or discourage) and shape Soviet interventionist conduct? The Soviets have long regarded military capability as a leading instrument in their foreign policy inventory. They have been cautious, but have and will continue to use their military power to create chaos and exploit rivalries in the developing world.

The Soviets see their military assistance, support, and intervention policies as essential in supporting their national security objectives in several ways. First, the USSR seems most inclined to play the military card to protect its own security and other interests beyond

the Soviet homeland. To support these aims, the USSR attempts to dominate or neutralize its contiguous neighbors (and, in the course of its other strategic pursuits, avoid war with the United States, which might escalate to involve the Soviet Union itself). Second, the Soviet Union seeks to defend its more remote clients. (As a corollary, Soviet military power is used to influence or even coerce those allies under more routine circumstances.) Third, the USSR has moved with considerable alacrity and effect to expand its own military influence at U.S. expense whenever the opportunity allows, but especially in the third world, where a plethora of volatile nations have emerged from disintegrating colonial empires. By acquiring base, access, and transit and overflight rights in the third world, the USSR has steadily enhanced its global military reach. In the long run, the Soviets realize that this reach will help assure their access to resources; conversely, the Soviets gain influence over the West by controlling its access to raw materials. Finally, through its ambitious military assistance policy, the Soviet Union can help encircle and isolate the People's Republic of China.

Despite its clearly aggressive posture, the USSR has been very cautious in its use of military power in crises. The USSR has been particularly wary of situations in which the armed forces or vital interests of the United States may be involved, or in which the Kremlin has been uncertain about a possible U.S. military response.[1] Even when an escalatory risk is not very likely, the Soviets recognize the advantages of self-imposed constraints on its military activities in the third world, including the ability to avoid taking the political

[1] See Thomas Wolfe, The Military Dimension in the Making of Soviet Foreign and Defense Policy, The Rand Corporation, October 1977.

consequences of overt intervention (for instance, appearing "imperialistic" in the eyes of the third world), easy dissociation from disasters, and evasion of problems following on the arousal of cultural, religious, and national sensitivities.

For these reasons, no matter how credible or attractive its military options may seem, the USSR has preferred such political and indirect military actions as clandestine operations, military and other aid, donation of technical and military expertise, and support of indigenous forces. As a general rule, military assistance measures are kept at the lowest possible profile except when critical military stakes exist.[2]

Before the invasion of Afghanistan, direct Soviet combat commitments in the third world were never of a scale or mix that satisfies the definition of intervention given above. The Soviet presence was limited to specialized, usually technical roles, not to primary combat responsibilities. In some cases, such as the Yemen civil war and Vietnam conflict, the USSR temporarily provided limited combat or technical assistance, but this aid was consistently specific, small-scale, and designed to cover for local force deficiencies.[3] In the 1970 War of Attrition, Soviet MiG-21 pilots flew air defense missions

[2] There are a few exceptions to this rule, such as the special occasions when the Soviets have sought to deter action by the Chinese in the wake of their clients' actions (after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in December 1978, and before the Indian invasion of East Pakistan in 1971). In these cases, the USSR consummated friendship pacts with the aggressor power to deter counteraction by the PRC.

[3] In the Yemen case, the Soviets took over some combat air support responsibilities after the Egyptian pilots who had done this before left the country in the wake of their June 1967 defeat by Israel. In Vietnam, Soviet personnel operated portions of the Hanoi SAM system. Other examples exist: in all cases, this pattern of technical (and limited) assistance is replicated.

solely, first over Egypt proper, then over the Suez Canal; and SA-3 crews assisted in the air defense role.[4] Beginning in 1977, the USSR introduced a substantial number of advisers and technical support personnel to shore up a deteriorating Ethiopian military position. But despite the size of the Soviet contingent, Cuban troops provided combat support.[5] (Evidence has also come to light that Soviet advisers are also attached to combat units in Southwest Africa.) From time to time, the Soviets have maintained large military contingents in some Mideast nations, but this has not been a combat presence. Finally, the Soviets periodically conduct naval calls and sail-bys, but the purpose of these operations has primarily been to show political interest, not to demonstrate resolve to intervene.[6] Only in rare cases, then, are Soviet troops provided for anything resembling a combat role, and in those cases, the small and specialized units introduced usually have a specific mission: to backstop a desperate ally's technical deficiencies.

[4] But the costs of the operation and the Israeli acceptance of the cease-fire and Secretary Rogers' plan prompted a fairly speedy Soviet withdrawal. Indeed, Soviet embarrassment over its air combat defeats with the Israelis rivals that of the failure of Soviet equipment in the recent Lebanon crisis. For a related discussion, see Y.F. Fukuyama, Soviet Threats to Intervene in the Middle East, 1956-1973, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica California, June 1980.

[5] Here, Soviet assistance was limited to C3 and logistic support. For instance, a Soviet flag officer was said to have commanded Ethiopian and surrogate troops in the ongoing war against Eritrean rebels and Somali forces. One report notes that the leadership of Lt. General Petrov over the joint Soviet-Cuban-Ethiopian command, along with the assistance of 1,000 Soviet advisers, turned the tide in that fighting. See Edward Luttwak, The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union, Final Report, C&L Associates, Potomac, Maryland, 25 March 1982, pp. 94-95.

[6] The Soviet fleet has been an often-exercised political device. Naval calls to show "concern" include stops during crises in Jordan (1970); the Indo-Pakistani war; Angolan fighting; the Ethiopian-Somali conflict; Guinea (1970); the UK/Iceland "cod wars" (1973); the 1974 Cyprus crisis; and more. See Michael McGuire, "Naval Power and Soviet Global Strategy," International Security, Spring 1979, pp. 163-182.

While it has seldom intervened directly, the USSR has backed intervention or lesser military action by some of its associates. Chief among these are Cuban combat force interventions in Angola (1975) and Ethiopia (1977). Such assistance nonetheless conforms to the same model of Soviet circumspection, and the same effect is achieved: the Soviet presence is minimized, while the Cubans seem to do relatively well among their third world hosts. Proxy intervention has been sponsored in certain regions because overall U.S. stakes there are not viewed as essential; hence, such action can be carried out with minimal risk. Invitations to assist a local regime (as well as substantial infiltration before the injection of combat formations) typify these cases.

Since Soviet experience with the indirect use of the military instrument has so far been felicitous, there seems no compelling reason for them to tamper with such an effective approach. Indeed, a 1979 Brookings Institution study catalogued some 187 incidents between June 1944 and June 1979 in which "Soviet armed forces were used as political instruments," and found that, of these, the number that can be considered direct military interventions or intervention threats after the end of World War II is limited.[7] By the definition given earlier, the Soviets have intervened directly only on three occasions; and only one incident applies to the third world: the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.[8] The Soviets have issued a somewhat

[7] See S. Kaplan and B. Blechman, Mailed Fist, Velvet Glove: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument, Report prepared for DARPA, Executive Summary, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., September 1979.

[8] The other interventions were those actions against the USSR's own Warsaw Pact allies, namely the Hungarians in 1956, and the Czechs in 1968.

larger list of threats to intervene in military crises in the third world since 1956.[9] These include six threats in the Middle East, the threat in 1958 to act over the Taiwan Straits crisis, and promises to defend Castro's Cuban revolution.[10] In sum, direct threats of intervention (and their full or partial execution) comprise a sparse chapter in the Soviets' post-World War II foreign policy story.

While the nature of each incident or threat to intervene is very scenario-specific, some patterns important to the design of U.S. response options run through all of the cases. These patterns are consistent with other Soviet uses of military power as an instrument of foreign policy. The Soviets, for one thing, have been careful to avoid situations that risk unmanageable escalation. As a rule, the Soviets would seem more inclined to intervene when the United States has no direct interest in the affair; when obvious political constraints or lack of political motivation reduce the likelihood of U.S. action; or when the U.S. has no credible counterintervention options. If U.S. interests are somewhat coincident with Soviet ones, as was the case in the Mideast in 1973, so much the better.[11]

Soviet intervention actions are also typified by essential Soviet interests (such as ensuring that client states remain subject to Soviet influence and preventing turbulence from infecting neighboring friendly

[9] For an authoritative account, see Y.F. Fukuyama, "Soviet Threats to Intervene," op. cit.

[10] The Middle East cases are the 1956 Suez crisis, the 1957 Syrian crisis, the 1958 Lebanon crisis, the 1967 June War, the 1970 War of Attrition, and the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

[11] The U.S. too had much at stake in heading off an Israeli push on to Damascus or military operations to destroy the Egyptian Third Army.

states and even portions of the USSR itself). Because explicit Soviet threats are reserved for contingencies of obvious importance to the Soviet Union and its essential interests abroad, they are not made idly-- and they have never been called directly. To avoid injecting unnecessary risks of escalation and to guard against embarrassing failures, however, Soviet threats are carefully tailored to the nature of possible Western involvement or reaction. By the same token, threats are not stated in a way that ties the Soviets to a course of events over which they have no control. To this end, imprecise though not necessarily bland statements frequently mark Soviet threats.[12] As Fukuyama also notes, threats are also carefully timed to prevent unpleasant surprises. Intervention threats have, for instance, even been timed to follow the peak of a crisis, when the eventual outcome of events was already clear.[13]

From a defense planner's perspective, several conclusions about the nature of future Soviet intervention scenarios are reasonable. For the reasons reviewed here, the Soviets would assiduously seek to assure a high probability of military success in their actual interventions. To better its odds, the Kremlin would prefer lengthy preparation and would undertake extensive advance "groundwork," (including the insertion of men in place, acquisition of an adequate base structure and necessary transit rights, and assurance of secure LOCs).[14] Substantial

[12] But it should also be recalled that before the Afghanistan invasion, the USSR did not issue any particularly blatant threat. Statements were limited to expressions of concern, both with the domestic situation and with the provision of military aid into the region.

[13] Fukuyama, op. cit.

[14] The fact that an intervention region is remote from U.S. naval forces may also figure prominently in Soviet calculations.

strategic warning may, in short, be received.

Ideally, the Soviets would also be unopposed in their intervention by local forces, especially insurgent ones (with whom they apparently have had trouble in several instances). To avoid the risks that automatic escalation might pose, the Soviets might rely on a series of incremental steps, from which expedient excursions, improvisations, and fall-backs are possible. The Soviets also would attempt to keep the geographic scope of intervention fighting as limited as possible. (Hence, U.S. preemption may be effective, although the need to hedge against other threats remains.)

Finally, the Soviets would try to minimize collateral political reactions and costs. Ideally, the Soviets would be invited into a region by some legitimate local authority. (Indeed, the greater reliability of local Communist parties lies behind the Soviets' policy since 1976 of preferring to establish relationships with Marxist, rather than simply anti-Western nationalist political entities.)[15] If it is possible to use proxies, that is an attractive bonus, too. The political context of a candidate Soviet intervention may therefore be quite a murky one.

In sum, factors that could motivate a Soviet intervention include key Soviet interests, a high expectation that the intervention will produce the desired effect, a low probability of U.S. response (and concomitantly, escalation), and to the extent possible, the suppression of political and economic fallout. Balancing these conditions properly

[15] See Alex Alexiev, The Use of Force in Soviet Policy, The Rand Corporation, November 1979, and Donald Zagoria, "Into the Breach: New Soviet Alliances in the Third World," Foreign Affairs, Spring 1979.

obviously would be a tricky job. Accordingly, given the Soviets' desire not to confront the U.S. militarily and their demonstrated success of the use of indirect military power, it is clear that Soviet intervention, or even threats of intervention, will continue not to be the option of choice. Even when important clients face serious risk or other problems, the USSR will probably prefer to provide arms and advisers, but let others do the fighting.[16] Threats of intervention could be conservatively scaled, and keyed to the point of suspected resistance in the antagonist's position, and not to the point at which resistance actually begins.[17] On the other hand, the Kremlin is aware of the advantages of decisive action. These and other factors make the intervention deterrence problem a very complex one.

CHANGES IN THE INTERVENTION CONTEXT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR
U.S. DEFENSE PLANNING IN THE 1980S

Taken alone, the foregoing discussion would suggest that the Soviet Union will probably shun the kinds of operations that have recently dominated U.S. third area contingency debate (e.g., massive and daring sprints into Iran). The crucial question now is, given the shifts in the global political and military context outlined above, might the consistent pattern of Soviet intervention behavior be changing?

The answer is uncertain. On the one hand, several factors, especially the desire to avoid military confrontation with the U.S., would seem to continue to encourage Soviet restraint, depending on what

[16] Even when allies have been involved, as was the case after China invaded Vietnam in 1979 or after the PLO/Syrian humiliations in 1982, the USSR has not provided tangible military assistance. Even when the situation is more stable, the assistance is still indirect: the classic case is Soviet support of Hanoi during the Vietnam war.

[17] Again see Fukuyama, op. cit.

was at stake and how Moscow perceived U.S. resolve. Despite shifts in the balance, and Soviet local military superiority along its own periphery, the Soviets would still be cautious if they perceived that vital U.S. or Western interests were at stake in an area. Although the USSR may have prestige and other interests on the line, the economic and national security importance of such regions (particularly the Mideast) is of relatively greater consequence to the West.[18]

Soviet fears of escalation are reinforced by the possibility that the United States or its allies may resort to the use of nuclear weapons should fighting not prove controllable by other means. Indeed, on a number of occasions the U.S. has issued such threats in more or less explicit terms. The historic unpredictability of the U.S. in crises may also serve to compound Soviet fears.

Furthermore, the U.S. has not only maintained global deployments, it has also headed up an albeit shrinking collection of alliances. Thus, the risk is posed that local fighting could spill over (or be initiated) in other regions, leading to both increased conventional military demands and, again, the potential for nuclear escalation. Because of the geographic situation and given U.S. capabilities, a direct U.S.-Soviet conflict would probably include a significant naval component. Given the lopsided naval force balance, difficulties in distinguishing among tactical and strategic naval operations, and the tendency of conflicts at sea to spread, further escalation risks are posed. Certainly, the United States may also be viewed (by conservative Soviet planners) as capable of defeating the Soviet Union in many areas,

[18] Throughout the 1950s, the positioning of SAC medium bomber and other military bases along the Soviet periphery concerned the Russians greatly. However, these bases have long since been vacated, and so that legitimate security threat has vanished.

or at least of driving up the costs and ruining the timing of the Soviet attack. In any case, no prudent Soviet planner would forget that the U.S. has always been capable, even should it suffer a major setback, of resorting to national mobilization in order to eventually reclaim its lost objectives, just as it did in World War II and Korea.

On the other hand, the correlation of forces has changed, as have some Soviet political motivations and responsibilities. U.S. regional security apparatuses (for instance, the "Northern Tier," based on Iran, to defend weak and unstable oil-producing regions further south) have in part collapsed, making it harder to organize for successful defense and perhaps also making it less likely that the U.S. would intervene in the first place. Also, new Soviet conventional military options have opened up because of improvements in the quality of their forces. And, over time, U.S. allies and friends have been less likely to automatically fall into line behind their superpower leader, especially when economic disaster (such as would be caused by disruption of petroleum shipments) threatens.[19]

Because the Soviets first intervened outside the Warsaw Pact with a large ground force in Afghanistan in 1979, some observers have persuasively argued that traditionally conservative Soviet attitudes toward intervention may be evolving in favor of a bolder policy. Despite the continuing deterrents to Soviet aggression, proponents of this view suggest several reasons why the historical pattern of Soviet conduct may be changing, making intervention a graver threat in the 1980s.

[19] Recent examples of fractures in western solidarity include the 1973 U.S. airlift to Israel, the divided opinion over an Olympics boycott in 1980, and the reaction to President Reagan's restrictions on the Yamal pipeline technology transfer issue in 1982.

The case for this view of greater Soviet aggression is best made by the military developments of the past two decades. Most important are changes in the global military balance between the U.S. and Soviet military blocs, changes that have served to limit key U.S. escalation options. Some time ago the U.S. lost nuclear superiority. Though the threat of escalation remains, with nuclear parity the military balance of primary interest to defense planners is that which exists in the immediate theater. A shaky conventional equilibrium now seems to exist in the European and Far East theaters. However, Western forces arrayed against the Soviets face political and operational problems that prevent their easy and expeditious transfer to third world locales. Traditional Western qualitative counters to Soviet ground force superiority (chiefly in the naval and tactical air fields) are increasingly checked by improved Soviet forces. And while their record in complicated intervention operations (both amphibious and airborne) has been a rather poor one, the USSR has also managed to fashion over time an increasingly capable specialized intervention potential of its own. (The Soviets have learned valuable combat lessons in Afghanistan that may also enhance Kremlin confidence in its intervention abilities.)[20] But above all, key third world theaters are contiguous to the USSR itself, which in essence transforms conventional ground forces into power projection ones.

[20] We need only compare their performance in Afghanistan with their shoddy operation in Czechoslovakia. See Jiri Valenta, "From Prague to Kabul: The Soviet Style of Intervention," International Security, Vol. V, No. 2, Fall 1980. The reader should also recall the USSR Naval Infantry's lack of experience and the spotty wartime performance of Soviet airborne troops in nearly every combat action save the Summer 1945 Manchurian Campaign.

A related question is whether a new generation of Soviet leaders may be more politically inclined to run bigger risks. This is quite difficult to predict, since any Soviet decision to act will inevitably depend on the specific context. Nonetheless, the following few points should be noted.

First, the Soviets seem to be increasingly dedicated to protecting their allies and satellites overseas. Although up to now the USSR seemed willing to "sell out" its friends if the situation so required,[21] for at least the past five years the USSR has been more willing to defend some of its worldwide "socialist gains." [22] Although Soviet defense of its allies will never be universal in scope, the USSR may now be more willing to intervene in certain places to prevent losses on the Indonesian and Egyptian model.[23] Given the not completely

[21] Such abandonments explain, inter alia, the Egyptian defection from the Bloc in the mid-1970s. We should recall that the USSR has failed to support its PLO and Syrian clients at desperate moments recently.

[22] For instance, with its warnings to the PRC over its invasion of Vietnam. See also Y.F. Fukuyama, New Directions for Soviet Mideast Policy in the 1980s, The Rand Corporation, September 1980, pp. 16-17. Dennis Ross notes that the USSR may, as time passes feel more "compelled to 'defend gains' in more distant, non-contiguous areas. The continuing Soviet need for external successes as signposts of progress, in conjunction with the deeply felt desire to have the full trappings of global power and status, are increasingly leading the Soviets to broaden the scope of their interests and 'internationalist' responsibilities. Combined with the Soviet perception of the retrenchment of U.S. power, their own ability to project and support their forces in more distant areas, and international trends that are yielding a more favorable 'correlation of forces,' the Soviet Union seems increasingly determined to emphasize its global roles and rights." See his essay, "Considering Soviet Threats to the Persian Gulf," International Security, Volume VI, Number 2, Fall 1981, (pages 164-5 for citation).

[23] PDRY is one example of an area where the USSR might intervene rather than be expelled or neutralized.

coincidental turmoil that exists in regions where the USSR has established client relationships, it is reasonable to assume that the Soviet guarantee of protection may be called upon with some frequency in the future. Of course, under these conditions Soviet intervention remains an option.

Second, the Kremlin simply may become more willing to take political risks or even to initiate crises that might evolve into intervention situations. Historically, Soviet intervention threats have been related to crises brought about by other nations. Depending on its long-term strategic goals, however, deliberate Soviet manipulation of third world crises (combined with military threats), may become a more commonly used tactic. As a related point, we should be mindful of the regrettably plausible scenarios in which Soviet clients or other nations precipitate trouble and then invite Soviet participation. Considering the recent actions of Soviet-sponsored regimes, such catalytically inspired intervention requirements are becoming a more clear and present menace.

Perhaps most important of all, the USSR may decide to preempt what may seem to them emerging Western initiatives, opportunities, and threats. In particular, the Soviets may view as intolerable fundamental realignments with the West of client (or parallel, hostile) states. For example, given its contiguous location, Iran must be especially important in Soviet calculations. Obviously, the USSR would prefer to achieve and maintain a political grip on that chaos-wracked land, but should a serious risk of Iranian rapprochement with the West emerge, the USSR might resort to military action.[24]

[24] This is one of the few plausible cases in which the USSR might

The Soviets undoubtedly will also recall that the United States has frequently responded to impending crises by mobilizing or deploying its own intervention forces. Given the crucial importance of "getting there first" in an intervention crisis, the USSR may seek to achieve a fait accompli or attempt to gain some deterrent advantage by early staging and other predeployment and readiness initiatives.

Third, and in a similar vein, the Soviet experience in Afghanistan suggests many lessons that might serve to increase the likelihood of Soviet intervention or threats to intervene. Insurgency in Afghanistan had been spreading quickly since the summer of 1978, and the Afghan army was plagued by defections. Also, it quickly became clear that the Taraki/Amin regime was not up to the task of setting things straight. In the future, the Soviets may be more likely to intervene earlier on a smaller scale, rather than allow a crumbling political situation to deteriorate irreparably.

Fourth, over the long run, new and vital strategic requirements may emerge for the USSR that may make intervention more likely. Although the Soviet Union does not now depend on the third world for essential resources, there would be much to gain by a credible capability to intervene in resource-rich regions. In particular, the USSR could exert control over Western economies by threats of or actual intervention into regions on which those economies depend. Actual military attack is not necessarily essential to Soviet aims in this regard; demonstrated capability may be sufficient. For instance, in the case of Mideast oil,

directly intervene on a large scale in a region of great importance to the U.S. As in 1941, perhaps the Soviets would cite the 1921 treaty with Iran that allowed the former to intervene should security conditions contrary to Soviet interests arise.

the USSR could ensure a steady hard-currency income by extorting "protection" payments, thereby solving many of its domestic problems.

Fifth, the increasingly bleak economic and social picture in the USSR may lead to a more militant Soviet foreign policy. History has shown with depressing regularity that nations often resort to external adventures to deflect domestic discontent. Should economic decay in the USSR roll on unchecked, the USSR may resort to its military machine (whose creation helped cause these economic problems) as a safety valve. Military adventures could distract attention from a faltering economy and create a social rallying point (increasingly important given demographic shifts).[25] Similarly, "preemptive intervention" or the like could be used to rationalize increased contemporary spending in return for promises of reduced defense burdens later.

Other indications suggest an increasing risk of Soviet interventionist activities in the third world. In most of these cases, alternatives to intervention (such as the continuing use of Cuban proxies) would remain the preferred Soviet option. However, this brief discussion has portrayed the potential danger of expanded Soviet military action in the third world. What forms might this intervention take and how can U.S. defense planning respond?

THE NATURE OF POSSIBLE SOVIET INTERVENTIONIST OPTIONS

Considerable effort has been invested in studying Soviet conventional military options in the third world, and a number of plausible scenarios for planning have been devised. Rather than discuss them here, or try to divine which are the more likely threats, I will

[25] Consult S.E. Wimbush and A. Alexiev, The Ethnic Factor in the Soviet Armed Forces, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California, March 1982, especially pages 37-50.

confine the following discussion to general classes of possible Soviet attack.

No matter what scenario is selected, it is clear that the USSR possesses a tremendous and somewhat flexible capacity for intervention in some adjacent lands. Indeed, simplistic inspection of the available facts and figures discourages reliance on conventional defense as a realistic option to the West.[26] Nonetheless, from a Soviet perspective, major and self-reinforcing constraints probably characterize the third world intervention problem. As the Soviets might view the problem, two classes of scenarios, based on the following characteristics, come to mind.

The first characteristic is the scale of contemplated intervention. By necessity, many interventions would be large-scale ones. To pursue even limited aims in hostile regions, a Vietnam-style (or greater) commitment would be essential. The Soviet Afghan commitment (a relatively small one considering the forces the Soviets could have deployed there to wipe out tribal insurgents) still involves from 80,000 to 110,000 men.[27] Naturally the more demanding the logistic situation, the larger the contingent needed. Even barring Western intervention, it would seem that Soviet operations in, for instance,

[26] For instance, it has been pointed out that the USSR can conduct not only long-range third world operations but can also unleash a major offensive along their Southern border without drawing down their formidable European and Far Eastern defense lines. According to the usual estimates, conversely, the U.S. is able to provide for credible defense in a major third world scenario only by depleting those forces tasked to other theaters or held in reserve.

[27] It has been suggested that inadequate logistics and an unwillingness to take higher casualties restrain an even larger deployment and that the gains of a victory with a greatly augmented presence would not exceed the political and military costs (compared to those of a gradual war of attrition).

Iran (with a much larger and better armed population than Afghanistan, a proportionately smaller base of Communist support, and about as bad a logistical base) could demand employment of several tens of divisions.

Similarly, the advantages of achieving campaign goals promptly and presenting counter-intervention forces with a fait accompli are not lost on the Soviets: yet, the faster the desired military effect, the larger and more concentrated the initial deployment must be. Moreover, a large initial deployment could also be intended to deter external action, even when an easy fait accompli is impossible. On the other hand, very limited interventions (e.g., to defeat a palace guard uprising) are possible.

The second key characteristic of a Soviet intervention is the distance between the interventionary theater and the Soviet homeland support base. The USSR can get places three ways--strategic airlift, strategic sealift, and overland movement--and for each means of transportation, the difficulty of projecting power and sustaining operations to a given range obviously increases at an irregular, but always faster than linear, rate. With range constraints on combat aircraft and airlifters, the failure of the USSR to devise an air refueling capability, and the rather Spartan base and transportation structure in areas outside the European USSR, the Soviets may perceive their "ton-mile" problem as a serious constraint even over short distances. Moreover, because of Eurasian geography, sustained operations much beyond the Soviet periphery would demand secure sea lines of communications which, given the current Soviet naval base structure and the capabilities of Western allies, would introduce great uncertainty into campaign calculations.

A third factor concerns the tempo of Soviet intervention. Like the United States, the USSR can deploy small but capable forces to almost any location on short notice. But planning and mobilization time for larger operations can take months. Here again, like the U.S., the Soviets prefer detailed and deliberate preparations before undertaking military action.[28] Even if intelligence indicators are ambiguous or deception is used, large-scale Soviet preparations should become apparent early, providing considerable time for Western response.

The fourth characteristic of any intervention scenario is the intensity and scope of the fighting that ensues. Logistic requirements including materiel consumption and the introduction of personnel or new units as attrition fillers are complicated if fighting is heavy or takes place over a large geographic area. The possible consequences of interdiction attacks on lines of communications compound all other problems.

These four factors effectively combine to yield a matrix of possible intervention scenarios, which when analyzed suggests the not surprising result that, from the vantage point of a U.S. defense planner, two generic contingencies incorporate the interesting intervention possibilities.[29] The first of these is a large-scale

[28] Obviously, the luxury of lengthy preparation may be overthrown by external events, but it is probably reasonable to assume that the Soviet Union will have the opportunity to make at least marginal preparations in peacetime for intervention.

[29] Other scenarios are certainly worth planning for, but do not represent force planning requirements beyond those needed for the scenarios described here. A short-range fait accompli invokes questions of the deterrent power of U.S. forces configured for operations along the Soviet periphery, and the responsiveness of a U.S. small-scale rapid reaction force. By the same token, if a U.S. force is capable of operating against Soviet forces in areas contiguous to the USSR, it certainly should be capable of acting in areas where a Soviet force is slowly deployed to a more distant region. Alternatively, and because other scenarios hold a higher priority, the force shortfall can and should be met by some measure of mobilization.

attack against a contiguous region; the second is the deployment to any distance of smaller-sized units (say, a division or less) with far less staying power.

Consider the first scenario in which the USSR attacks a neighboring nation in large force. Here, the Soviets would benefit from overland logistics (i.e., rail and road, with tactical air and sea lift) and local logistic terminals. Inventorying candidate target nations, it is clear that manpower and materiel requirements would be substantial. Mobilization times accordingly would be greater, as would be the escalation risks attached to timely Western deployment into the target region. The attack would include elements of all Soviet services and could follow several axes of advance. The Soviet rear area and its LOCs would be secure, if not invulnerable. This scenario is exactly the one for which the Southwest Asia-specific Rapid Deployment Force is now being designed. Depending on developments in other theaters and the disposition of the Soviet central reserve, this attack could potentially include from 25 to 35 divisions.[30] While nearly all of these forces are usually at less than full readiness, there is no reason to doubt that the full threat described here can be brought to bear in a single region more or less simultaneously.

[30] The major-contingency Soviet threat to the Gulf has been discussed in great detail elsewhere. Twenty-four divisions are in the Soviet Southern Military Districts. Counting the six divisions in the Ural and Volga MDs (and deducting, if you will, the six divisions in Afghanistan), and allowing for 2-6 Airborne divisions and KGB and other forces, the division count given here is clear. See J. Epstein, "Soviet Vulnerabilities in Iran and the RDF," International Security, Volume VI, Number 2, pp. 126-158; U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power, op. cit., and Luttwak, op. cit., p. 137. Given logistic net deficiencies, however, it is not clear what frontages as large a Soviet force as is sometimes predicted would be able to fight on. But it should be noted that the formerly low-readiness Southern front forces have steadily been upgraded over the past few months.

Let us turn to the second scenario that should be used for planning purposes. The initial force increment sent could be anything from an elite commando team to a division-sized force. Deployment could be accomplished on short notice to any desired range. The primary means for moving those forces would be airlift (by the military and civil air fleets, VTA and Aeroflot) or administrative sealift. The Soviets maintain a considerable capability for such operations with seven fully ready airborne divisions. Soviet doctrine specifies other roles for these troops,[31] but it is plausible that several might be used for third world operations. The limiting factor here, of course, is Soviet ability to transport and especially to supply these troops under combat conditions. The Soviet airlift fleet would depend on bases outside the USSR to reach third world locations outside the areas considered in the first generic scenario. Soviet experience with these forces at long range is limited and dismal. True, the Soviets have an impressive sealift capability, but they are deficient in forcible entry capabilities.[32] Finally, the USSR lacks the tactical air range needed

[31] Airborne troops are, among other things, to serve as a strategic high command reserve and as a special operations contingency force. Note that the Soviets can lift a full airborne division into Northern Saudi Arabia, or two airborne divisions to, roughly speaking, the Zagros Mountains.

[32] The Soviets are slowly improving their blue ocean amphibious shipping capabilities. They recently launched the 13,000 ton Ivan Rogov. However, a full amphibious build-up now seems to await proof demonstrations of the lead ship. Similarly, the Soviet Navy has improved upon its pitiful sustainability capability via the Fleet UNREP class Berezina. Overall, however, it is clear that a U.S. MAF-style capability is many years away. Moreover, the Soviet "naval infantry" force seems more oriented to the Baltic than to a third world scenario: that force in any case has seen no action and cannot be considered anything like the equal of U.S. Marine forces. The Soviets are only now constructing a big-deck carrier: it will be years before that ship goes to sea, and many years beyond that before a fully workable CVBG capability is in Soviet hands.

to escort bombers and long range transports, and to provide air defense and ground support for forward troops. From the Soviet perspective, even more problematic would be that no matter how they had been moved, their forces would face considerable resupply problems in the event of Western interdiction. As I will point out in the next section, the U.S. can defeat those forces at longer ranges without additions to our existing force structure. The problem in contending with those units will be both tactical and strategic: their sudden deployment, and the political risks inherent in a superpower showdown, regardless of each side's theoretical combat potential, regardless of mobilization time.

IV. U.S. DEFENSE POLICY OPTIONS

If over the past three decades a direct conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union in the third world has been an interesting contingency to some, it has not had much practical effect on U.S. defense preparations. It is clear now, however, that concrete steps must be taken to guard against this ominous possibility. The essential question from a defense planner's point of view is how the priority of each of the possible contingencies compares with others. Even with 5% or 7% annual real growth in the defense budget, it is clear that a major commitment to plausible third world contingencies (and in particular, the most demanding Persian Gulf scenario) would require some reduction in other U.S. defense undertakings.[1] Thus, we should begin with an assessment of the relative importance of individual U.S. security aims. After determining what priorities should be attached to different theaters, we can decide what scenarios are worth hedging against in selected theaters.

U.S. DEFENSE PRIORITIES

What U.S. military preparations are needed to defend our interests in the third world? A more prudent question is to ask what is possible. Significant changes in the size and mix of the U.S. GPF force structure are unlikely: even the expanded Reagan administration defense effort does not support major posture expansion.[2] Proposed increases in

[1] See the present author's The Reagan Defense Budget Plan: Prospects and Pressures, The Rand Corporation, P-6721, January 1982.

[2] William W. Kaufmann, "The Defense Budget," in Setting National Priorities, the FY1983 Budget, (J. Pechman, ed.), Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1982. Plans for the "600 ship Navy" are the anticipated exception to the force sizing restriction.

defense spending have not won overwhelming political support and the limited consensus that now exists would be jeopardized should demands for unaffordable new defense commitments be put forward. (Some other provisions needed for global contingency capabilities, such as conscription, clearly are also not now feasible.) Rather than invite disaster by attempting to force an unrealistic resource augmentation, it is sensible to think about how current forces can be used in different ways to support essential U.S. interests.

I noted earlier that U.S. defense planning has focused on a few primary contingencies--especially NATO's central front. The main U.S. defense effort, measured by forces and budgets, is and should continue to be devoted to European defense. But considerable capability remains in the U.S. arsenal after the American contribution to NATO is deducted (including about a third of our division equivalents and tactical air wings, and the lion's share of our Navy and Marine Corps forces).

Traditionally, a Far East contingency has been considered the probable consumer of those resources and forces not otherwise assigned to NATO or to a sluggish central strategic reserve.[3] It is by no means clear, however, that U.S. "discretionary" capabilities should be allocated as they are now. Despite the low probability of major Soviet intervention in the Mideast, a good argument can be made that, compared with the risks that might emerge in some other theaters, and taking into account the consequences of U.S. failure to mount a successful defense therein, we should consider the reorientation of some of the forces allocated to the Pacific and the central reserve to a Southwest Asian contingency.[4]

[3] See William W. Kaufmann, Planning Conventional Forces, 1950-1980, op. cit., for a discussion of U.S. theater allocations.

[4] See Robert Komer, "Maritime Strategy Versus Coalition Defense,"

The underlying rationale for this reprioritization includes the facts: (1) that three simultaneous major wars may not be such a likely proposition as to require very expensive force structure augmentations, and (2) that there is no point in successfully defending Europe if we cannot prevent a loss of Persian Gulf oil that would destroy that area's economic viability. As Komer notes, "if reducing the likelihood that the United States might be confronted (as the JCS fear) with a simultaneous 'three-front' war is strategically desirable, the most promising prospects ... lie in East Asia." [5] To build a credible U.S. Persian Gulf capability may even enhance deterrence in our highest priority theater, Europe, because of the close strategic relationship between these contingencies. Recently, the RDF contingency seems to be emerging as its own separate scenario, spun off from Europe: to state U.S. priorities as I have here would reverse that dangerous disconnection by advising the USSR that it could not package its aggressive aims in convenient parcels.

This reprioritization does not imply that the U.S. should mobilize against the full range of possible Soviet threats in the Gulf, much less the entire third world. We cannot provide for all scenarios; moreover, the risks and interests involved do not all demand costly peacetime preparations. To determine what scenarios most merit attention, U.S. counterintervention policy should be based on the following three principles. First, any U.S. action to defeat Soviet intervention must serve key U.S. security interests. While our declared political

Foreign Affairs, Summer 1982, for a detailed discussion of this scheme of priorities, especially pp. 1139-1140.

[5] Ibid., p. 1140.

commitments may recognize no limits, there can be no justification for orienting defense plans and budgets around secondary interests when primary ones remain at risk. Second, an overall U.S. strategy for such operations should be based on a realistic appreciation of the capabilities required to defeat threats. This does not require that we plan on a purely worst case basis. Nor should it be forgotten that alternatives to purely military solutions do exist. Simply put, for deterrence to be effective, our declaratory, force, and employment policies should be consistent. Third, the United States should be able to count on some assistance from others concerned with the designated threat. In the case of Persian Gulf oil, for instance, U.S. defense plans should be coordinated with those of certain local nations and those of our allies who rely on oil imported from the Gulf.

These principles limit the scope of the third world intervention problem to realistic proportions. Based on these principles, the following two points are proposed. First, the U.S. should prepare for a scenario in which the USSR attacks vital Mideast petroleum producing regions. It is true that the threat of Soviet invasion is not the most probable threat in the region; moreover, the historical record suggests that the USSR would not view a major invasion as the option of choice. But since the stakes to the West in this area are so high, and because the USSR is adjacent to the Gulf and maintains the forces needed for such an attack, it seems reasonable to use this scenario for force planning purposes, in spite of its relative unlikelihood. Second, U.S. contingency planning (but not force structure planning) should be readied for quick-reaction operations against relatively small Soviet interventions in a number of remote but nonetheless important third

world regions. To outline the requirements of and demonstrate the rationales for these contingencies, it is useful to return now to the distinction between the two generic Soviet intervention scenarios drawn in Section III.

DEFENDING SOUTHWEST ASIA AGAINST SOVIET INTERVENTION

Defense of raw materials and especially Persian Gulf oil production is a critical national security objective. Regrettably, a Soviet invasion of one or more Southwest Asian nations is a very demanding third world contingency from a U.S. defense planning perspective: we are far away from the theater and U.S. competence at large, quick deployment operations and our ability to adapt to the requirements of this new and difficult theater are subject to question given current planning practices. Despite high-quality intervention forces, unrivalled strategic mobility, and en route bases, there is no doubt that we would face great difficulties should the Soviets invade this region.

However, the Soviets would confront a number of obstacles as well, and there are many options open to the U.S. to greatly impede and eventually defeat a Soviet attack (such as interdicting tenuous regional LOCs). Moreover, by any objective analysis, the U.S. has forces that with some reorganization and new plans could defend against even a worst-case local Soviet threat. The U.S. probably could deploy those forces without grave risk to NATO.[6]

[6] True, as noted above, should the USSR launch sudden and simultaneous all-out offensives in several places, the prospects for the U.S. and its allies would be bleak in some locales. But the forces probably can be found to secure at least two theaters: NATO and Southwest Asia. And assuming that we should defend theaters in order of their strategic importance, this seems a proper allocation.

Calculating in detail the defense forces needed to stop a Soviet invasion of, say, Iran, is beyond the scope of this paper. But the following account seems a quite reasonable guideline.[7]

If Soviet ground forces attempted to make a sudden dash to the head of the Persian Gulf over some of the most difficult terrain in the world, the United States would probably need no more than four divisions and six tactical air wings to halt the dash well short of its goal. However, if the Soviet forces were 'invited' into northern Iran and could establish themselves there without outside intervention, as many as nine divisions and fourteen fighter-attack wings might be required to halt what could subsequently prove to be a much heavier attack Barring extreme and perhaps unrealistic cases of rapid Soviet preparation and movement, fast sealift with a capacity of 300,000 tons should be sufficient to provide [sustaining forces].

With help from its allies, the United States can provide these forces without denuding the NATO line. According to Kaufmann's calculations, the U.S. can provide the forces required to defend against the average of the worst and sudden threat cases (6-1/2 divisions and 10 tacair wings) without seriously undercutting any other major defense commitment. Even in the worst case, all that would be required is adjusting our Pacific strategy to a strategic defense until other crises had passed, just as we did in World War II.[8] Table One (next page) shows, in fact, that with FY83 projected forces, U.S. defense requirements in all three theaters can probably be satisfied, except

[7] William W. Kaufmann, "The Defense Budget," op. cit., p. 87.

[8] In World War II, defeat of Germany came first while the U.S. went on the strategic defense in the Pacific. While gaining outstanding victories, such early battles as Midway held Japanese expansion, and did not constitute offensive campaigns. See Bernard Brodie, A Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy, Second Edition, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1944. Note that to sustain U.S. Gulf divisions indefinitely would require perhaps 75,000 tons per month in convoys, which should be no problem.

TABLE ONE
SELECTED U.S. FORCE REQUIREMENTS FOR MAJOR THEATERS

	Regional Theater		
	<i>Eur/Lant</i>	<i>PG/IO</i>	<i>FE/WPac</i>
Assume Best-Case Gulf Threat (U.S. Perspective)			
<i>Ground Force Division Equivalents</i>	26 -	4 -	3 -
<i>Carrier Battle Groups</i>	6 -	4 -	2 -
<i>Land Based Tacair Wings</i>	35 -	6 -	5 -
Assume Medium-Case Gulf Threat			
<i>Ground Force Division Equivalents</i>	24 -	6.5 -	2.5 (1/2)
<i>Carrier Battle Groups</i>	6 -	4 -	2 -
<i>Land Based Tacair Wings</i>	32 -	10 -	4 (1)
Assume Worst-Case Gulf Threat			
<i>Ground Force Division Equivalents</i>	24 -	9 -	0 (3)
<i>Carrier Battle Groups</i>	6 -	4 -	2 -
<i>Land Based Tacair Wings</i>	32 -	14 -	0 (5)

Key: - means no shortfall; (#) means shortfall of # units.

Assumes U.S. Forces Projected for FY83. USMC active and reserve wings are considered the equivalent of two USAF wings.

Source: Adapted from William W. Kaufmann, *Defense Policy*, in *Setting National Priorities: the FY1983 Budget*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1982, and author's estimates.

when the worst-case Persian Gulf scenario is postulated and no augmentation of the U.S. posture beyond current levels is assumed. Even then, only the Far East/West Pacific requirements face a shortfall.

Contrary to many allegations, the most pressing third area military problem is not one of firepower or sustainability; it is one of timing.[9] Specifically, we risk a disaster in the Gulf only when U.S. forces arrive too late to defend vital areas. The question then is the time it would take the Soviets to attain their combat objectives. The Soviet operation would require some mobilization time and would then have to travel more than 1,000 kilometers through generally poor terrain that is in many places very vulnerable to interdiction attacks. Epstein estimates that it would take the USSR 90 days at the least to arrive at Abadan. Even with strategic warning and decision delays, it would seem that the U.S. could move its main contingents to the region in time and in sufficient force. All in all, a conventional solution seems to be within reach, without major force structure augmentations or a complete dereliction of U.S. responsibilities in NATO.

Simply insuring against bad timing breaks will not, however, suffice if our aim is to construct an effective and efficient defense. Nor will a routine approach best communicate our intention to succeed in this defense to the Soviets. Besides traditional defense preparations, certain steps can be taken that would not only improve the U.S. conventional deterrent in this region, but would also maintain the political viability of the program, and would provide, over the long run, extra deterrence in other areas. Within the context of other force improvements, we must therefore change our usual approach to GPF defense planning for this contingency.[10]

[9] See J. Epstein, "Soviet Vulnerabilities in Iran and the RDF Deterrent," International Security, Fall 1981, pp. 136-37.

[10] There is substantial debate over a variety of procedural

From a planner's perspective, U.S. options should be designed with four themes in mind. First, the Persian Gulf scenario must be established as an essential general-purpose force contingency. Furthermore, U.S. forces for this contingency must be tailored to the requirements of the theater, as with the current NATO model; we should not rely on a "go anywhere" rapid deployment capability. Second, because of political constraints on U.S. peacetime deployments in the region, many novel readiness measures must be explored. For this reason, Persian Gulf planning would occupy new ground between the traditional U.S. planning approaches to "primary" and "secondary" contingencies. Third, the U.S. cannot and should not "go it alone" in planning for a Gulf contingency. Fourth, the success of U.S. deterrence in the region depends on Soviet perceptions of U.S. resolve to fight should it intervene. To signal this resolve, U.S. efforts must concentrate realistically on the task of winning the first campaign in areas of clear importance without relying on overarching independent deterrent concepts. In addition, we should stress that Gulf security is wholly linked to our security interests elsewhere.[11]

REORGANIZING U.S. DEFENSE FOR A PERSIAN GULF CONTINGENCY

The Persian Gulf must be added as a high priority contingency for U.S. force planning purposes, and the U.S. must set aside specialized forces on the NATO and ROK models for Southwest Asian defense. As noted earlier, U.S. planners have felt that strategic mobility, flexible

questions--for instance, whether the Army or Marines should have the RDF mission--but none of these issues are individually as important as the following changes.

[11] The following discussion draws on points raised by R. W. Komer and W. W. Kaufmann in personal communications.

combat forces, and a central U.S. reserve can be a cheaper substitute for dedicated forces in defending global U.S. interests, and a reasonable deterrent to boot. However, the record of U.S. planning for such capabilities has been a poor one, for several reasons.[12]

First, the rather large U.S. reserve force clearly has never been a "flexible and responsive instrument." No matter how capable active and reserve forces are once deployed, the U.S. has generally not paid serious attention to the problem of moving forces to distant conflict regions. Strategic lift has never enjoyed a solid political constituency, and preoccupation with bolt-from-the-blue wars has led to reliance on fast reinforcement by air, which nonetheless fails to close the needed tonnages in time. Moreover, U.S. amphibious shipping capabilities have declined: U.S. amphibious lift now amounts to one division plus overhead--and it is divided on two coasts. Another factor overthrowing "flexibility" is a series of political obligations which have tied U.S. forces to regions where lesser commitments may be militarily sufficient.[13]

Furthermore, it has proven quite difficult to design truly versatile forces. That being the case, it is not clear that NATO-model divisions, configured to fight in heavily urbanized and forested Europe, are the best ones for action in deserts, where engagement ranges and supply lines are longer; or in the mountains, where the initiative is usually held by small, highly trained light forces. The central role of the European scenario also biases training, organization, and even

[12] For expansion on these points, see William W. Kaufmann, Planning Conventional Forces, op. cit.

[13] The leading example is Northeast Asia with earmarked forces including the 2d Infantry division in Korea, the Third Marine division in Okinawa, and the 25th Infantry division in Hawaii.

the design of individual weapons in a way that may not be appropriate for Southwest Asia. Similarly, U.S. orientation toward complex and very large operations tilts our efforts in favor of deliberate and massive mobilization planning, an approach that may be acceptable in a Vietnam scenario, but which could be too slow for a Gulf contingency.[14]

Because the key issue in a Persian Gulf scenario is timing, it therefore probably is in our best interests to devise new, specialized planning factors for this case and not strive for an ambitious degree of strategic and tactical elasticity.

Not only must our Southwest Asian forces be specialized ones, but the U.S. must have a broad range of preplanned contingency options. True, not every aspect of a Southwest Asian operation need be charted in advance, but in some areas detailed preparation is critical: while canned options rarely, if ever, prove to be exactly the right ones when war breaks out, when there is a need to act quickly they are far better than nothing. For instance, in a crisis, prepared plans would be essential for effectively compensating for U.S. capabilities drawn down in other regions (NATO, and even in the strategic nuclear arsenal if tankers are tied up), and for training. It would also be important to commence interdiction operations (whether by air or combat engineering teams) in Iran as soon as possible after a decision to do so. Similarly, the coordination of fast sealift to the Indian Ocean would place a fantastic demand on U.S. staffs: and that burden could be substantially reduced by advance provisions.[15]

[14] In past decades, we have only mobilized quickly in Korea, and that was not a happy experience. Placing too much emphasis on supposedly "go anywhere-do anything" forces also does not tend to lead to the necessary political consensus, doctrinal image, and specific forces and plans.

[15] In recent national mobilization exercises (MOBEXes) such as Nifty Nugget and Proud Spirit the U.S. ability to ready, organize and control its total posture in a crisis was shown to be deficient.

ALTERNATIVES TO IN-THEATER PREPOSITIONING

A second and novel problem before U.S. planners is the need to develop defense concepts that do not rely heavily on in-theater basing, a task that requires blending our traditional approaches to primary and secondary contingencies. As with historic primary contingencies, we face a powerful and highly mobile threat that can materialize virtually overnight. In such cases, the best way to buy time for mobilization against short warning attacks has been through prepared and deployed defense lines. But as with secondary contingencies, the U.S. cannot count on having forces in place in the Gulf until possibly very late in a crisis.[16]

What alternatives exist to massive predeployment? As noted, air and demolition attacks on enemy LOCs can buy some time to deploy and construct defense lines. The crucial issue here is where the defense perimeter should be drawn. Though dissuading Soviet armed intervention of any type is important, the U.S. stake in Southwest Asia is concentrated around the Gulf itself. Given the inherent vulnerability of oil fields, it is essential to create a defense line at sufficient range, but this does not mean that the U.S. should defend the entire region.[17] Thus, U.S. alternatives to predeployment should concentrate

[16] See Jeffrey Record, "The RDF: Is the Pentagon Kidding?", The Washington Quarterly, Summer 1981, p. 43, and Dov Zakheim "Of Allies and Access," The Washington Quarterly, Winter 1981 for discussions of the problems caused by lack of peacetime access.

[17] True, the Soviets could only occupy, say, the Northern half of Iran with the long range aims of consolidating their forces and logistics before pushing South, or even better, of exploiting this military success to achieve a political one. Given the long-term consequences to the USSR of a Western response (including a probable huge defense buildup) and the world political reaction (not to mention the risks of escalation), a Northern Iranian "grab" may or may not seem to the Kremlin an attractive option. Since Western interests lie further to the South, this particular scenario should not be a primary basis for U.S. planning.

more on establishing a timely yet limited main defense perimeter while delaying the Soviet advance, rather than on very extended, forward defense lines.

Along with the regular deploying forces needed under this concept, a range of capabilities are necessary early in the campaign to create a deterrent to continuing Soviet attack, defend time-urgent targets like refineries, contend with saboteurs, armed reconnaissance, and airborne forces, and to harass and delay the main axes of Soviet advance on the ground. Fortunately, the U.S. currently maintains impressive quick reaction capabilities in the form of tactical air power (land and carrier based), its one airborne division and other special forces, and Marine forces afloat.[18] The United States also maintains the military and civilian airlift needed to move large numbers of troops (though not much heavy equipment), on short notice. Carrier battle groups in particular could provide some margin of timely long-range strike potential, depending on U.S. willingness to move these task forces within range of the land-based enemy air threat.

Three problems confound planning for early and eventual deployment. First, there is the issue of regional nations' willingness to provide access to facilities. Our outstanding forcible entry capability notwithstanding, there is no way of moving a counter-Soviet intervention force into key regions without local approval. Since this approval might be delayed until after a Soviet invasion begins, U.S. planning is

[18] Taking into account the USMC's strategic mobility, its vertical envelopment and over the shore forcible entry capability, and its increasing VSTOL ability, an FMF would be the force of choice not only for early operations to secure points of entry, but also to hold the littoral flanks of a U.S. beachhead and to serve as a strategic reserve force.

complicated. Next is the question of support and reinforcement of early arriving forces. Sustaining increments for even light forces tend to be heavy and would have to come by sea.[19] Third, augmentation of early deploying troops with mechanized divisions and tactical air wings must take place within the time margin created by forward defense lines and interdiction campaigns.

With host-nation approval, the U.S. can probably satisfy the logistic needs of early deploying forces. For follow-on forces, the situation is more difficult, chiefly for timing reasons. Accordingly, for larger and heavier units, there are basically four possibilities for overcoming dangerous delays. First, equipment can be prepositioned nearby at sea. Current plans do call for building up prepositioned gear at sea to a Marine division equivalent's equipment in a few years. (The next generation of MPS ships will be capable of offloading in undeveloped harbors.)

A second possibility is fast sealift. Even with evasive routing, modern container and Ro/Ro ships could move the necessary tonnages to the Mideast within about three weeks of their departure from East Coast ports. These convoys must of course be protected at times, a mission which, given the high quality of U.S. naval forces and Soviet out-of-area sustainability and base deficiencies, should be quite feasible.[20]

Third, some very attractive possibilities can be explored for the use of "intermediate bases" for prepositioning and staging.

[19] It is conceivable that the U.S. could deploy and maintain some forces in the field in a completely austere setting, but they would be on the order of a few battalions or a wing or two of tactical air--hardly a force able to defeat a major Soviet one.

[20] This is the case even allowing for attrition to sealift and attacks on SLOC terminals.

Intermediate basing confers a number of advantages given the unavailability of in-theater facilities. The closer to the war zone U.S. intermediate bases are, the more the strategic-lift dilemma becomes a more manageable tactical-lift problem.[21] Men could also be moved by civil airlift to such facilities to marry up with their unit kits as an escalatory warning in a crisis. Israel, Turkey, and Egypt have been suggested as possibilities (and if worse comes to worst the U.S. could also draw temporarily from its POMCUS stocks in Central Europe).

Finally, while there are constraints on U.S. ability to conclude joint security pacts with regional powers, many possibilities exist for informal arrangements that serve the same ends. Here, bases are a particularly interesting case. Runways, aircraft shelters, refueling gear, and so on, could easily and unobtrusively be made compatible with U.S. requirements. For another possibility, U.S. lift could ferry weapons, not fuel and water, which can be much more inexpensively provided by local states. Local nations can also provide for secure peacetime air defense of their military and petroleum facilities, preventing the USSR from neutralizing them before U.S. air superiority in the region could be established. There are many other options for Host Nation Support programs that too need not be widely advertised.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM FRIENDS AND ALLIES

A third crucial factor is that the U.S. should not plan to defeat a Soviet Persian Gulf invasion alone. Today, U.S. planning in general ignores important possibilities for coalition war.[22] At the very

[21] In an intermediate basing situation, moreover, we could rely on C-130s which could use more airfields and which would require less maintenance. See J. Hamre, U.S. Airlift Forces: Enhancement Alternatives for NATO and non-NATO Contingencies, Congressional Budget Office report, Washington D.C., April 1979.

[22] See R.W. Komer, op. cit.

least, collaboration must extend to the states being defended: defending refinery complexes against sophisticated attack would be impossible without the host nation's cooperation.[23] But many other possibilities exist. Since the U.S. would provide large combat forces, others should help as they can. First, local nations at risk, not to mention European and Oriental economies that depend on Gulf oil, should be willing to absorb some of the host costs for infrastructure, readiness, and operations. Second, the possibility that the U.S. can itself use "surrogate" forces (the Egyptians or Pakistanis have been mentioned) has not yet been fully explored. Third, sophisticated allied combat capabilities may be forthcoming. For instance, the French maintain a constant local presence: a brigade of Foreign Legion troops and between 10 and 20 ships are headquartered at Djibouti. Fourth, sea lanes to the Southwest Asian theater run through areas in which both U.S. allies and enemies maintain bases. Local friendly naval and air forces should be on call to help neutralize any Soviet interdiction threat in nearby waters.

In addition to these practical contributions, a number of advance provisions relating to other theaters must be made with allies and friends. Under present arrangements, U.S. forces committed to the Gulf may also be assigned to NATO. Not only burden-sharing but mobilization contingencies, then, must be coordinated in advance so as not to tempt Soviet action or leave allies open to blackmail in another theater. A U.S.-Soviet crisis might also provide an opportunity for ambitious Soviet clients to launch their own attack under the cover of a

[23] Hearings on "Oilfields as Military Objectives," U.S. Congress, Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1981, pp. 66-74.

superpower imbroglio. On account of the risk of simultaneous third world conflicts emerging from a major one, U.S. commitments in the Gulf cannot be separated from our responsibilities elsewhere.

U.S. DETERRENT POLICY FOR SOUTHWEST ASIA

Security in third areas rests ultimately on the Kremlin's recognition of vital U.S. interests and on our willingness and ability to defend those interests. Advance planning for countering Soviet third world intervention relies above all else on a strategy of political deterrence. U.S. defense planning should recall the patterns of Soviet intervention behavior with regard to their desire to assure a high degree of confidence in intervention, and in the Soviets' cautious approach to escalation. Confronted with specialized and exercised U.S. plans and forces, the Soviets would be far less confident that a U.S. president would delay or avoid action because he lacked options. And the reduced probability of a successful fait accompli would, given what we know about Soviet risk calculus, also enhance deterrence.

No matter what the capabilities of U.S. intervention forces, though, as defense planners we cannot predetermine Kremlin perceptions of U.S. resolve; the best we can do is to focus on a posture that is able to credibly defend as much of the U.S. interest in a region as political leadership may require. At the same time, U.S. declaratory strategy cannot endorse a notion that, without fail, fighting will be limited to a particular region or to a given intensity of conflict. If the U.S. posture can credibly deter major conventional attack, in short, it should have considerable deterrent power at lesser levels of aggression.

Certainly the forces needed to contend with some of these threats are expensive. Because that is so, many people have advocated alternative strategies that rely on stressing the risks of escalation (supposedly to compensate for inadequate defense capability) in order to deter the Soviets. Two proposals have been advanced along these lines. First, some have advocated reliance on a nuclear deterrent (along with a conventional tripwire) to dissuade Soviet adventurism. Second, a proposed strategy of "horizontal escalation" has sought to countervail with the threat of military action in other locales in response to aggression in areas of U.S. disadvantage. What is said to give that strategy its teeth is the ability of the U.S. to counterstrike in areas where the Soviets are especially weak.

Both of these approaches seem to be less reliable than a direct U.S. defense commitment in light of demonstrated Soviet intervention behavior. It is true that threatened use of nuclear weapons would pose a risk of escalation that the Soviets would be forced to consider. How certainly such a threat would deter the Soviet Union in conditions of parity, however, (and how our allies would accept such a policy) is unclear.[24] How nuclear employment could ultimately defend fragile oil complexes is another unanswered question.

Furthermore, at least in Soviet eyes, failure to resolutely commit to the defense of a region by local, conventional and direct means could reveal an apparent lack of importance of that region, or signal a priori

[24] Whether U.S. escalatory threats even made the deterrent difference in conditions of past U.S. nuclear superiority is subject to some doubt. See the present author's, Nuclear Weapons Policy, Planning, and War Objectives; Toward a Theater-Oriented Deterrent Strategy, The Rand Corporation, P-6764, March 1982.

U.S. hesitance to escalate. Since it is difficult to think of cases in which horizontal escalation options could lead to U.S. gains that are sufficient to counter losses resulting from Soviet victory in key regions, the worth of that strategy too must be questioned. Since it is not clear that a sufficient U.S. and allied defense posture cannot be devised without resorting to strategies of expedience, it is by no means obvious that the United States should desire or be forced to adopt an escalation-oriented strategy.

In planning for third world deterrence, it is vital to recall that U.S. defense objectives cannot be universal. If war comes, U.S. actions must be directed toward our vital interests: primarily defense of crucial resources. Though it would be possible to plan to discourage attacks everywhere, defense of key resources must, given resource constraints, be the principal basis for third world intervention planning. By carefully linking U.S. preparations and economic interests, Soviet tests of U.S. resolve would, I propose, be discouraged. The costs of acquiring the necessary wherewithal certainly seem worth bearing, considering the deterrent capability the U.S. could muster.

In short, we should always recall that it is better to deter than to fight. Given Soviet escalation fears and their traditional risk-taking calculus, the best way to deter Soviet aggression in areas of major importance to the U.S. is to design a force specifically meant to defend those areas and do everything possible to make that force a credible one.

RESPONDING TO SOVIET INTERVENTION IN OTHER CASES

This leaves the second scenario for planning, namely, a Soviet intervention in limited force into a location not contiguous with the USSR. In general, this scenario poses nothing of the problems that would be encountered in a Soviet invasion on its periphery. Such an attack could be effectively met, at least over the foreseeable future, by U.S. forces in being. The technical difficulties in this scenario can be resolved by planning and operational adjustments and do not require force structure responses.

This particular type of scenario has been discussed elsewhere.[25] Thus, I will review here only the relevant overall findings of these and other studies. There are two subtypes of scenarios that warrant defense planning attention. First, the USSR may intervene in a small and potentially sudden action within range of its strategic mobility capabilities. Second, the USSR could intervene in such locations in larger force, but only after a substantial warm-up period.

Consider the former "sudden threat" scenario. The Soviets maintain what ordinarily seem to be capable intervention resources, among them a large Military Airlift force (which is supplemented by the state airline, Aeroflot)[26], a modest Naval Infantry force, a variety of armed reconnaissance and other special forces, seven fully alert (and one training) airborne divisions, and a vast Merchant Marine.

[25] For examples, see B. Blechman and S. Kaplan, Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1978; R. Osgood, Limited War Revisited, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 1979; and Defense Marketing Service, Rapid Deployment Force, especially Section I, Washington D.C., 1980.

[26] A description of VTA and Aeroflot can be found in John Collins, U.S.-Soviet Military Balance: Concepts and Capabilities, 1960-1980, McGraw-Hill, New Jersey, 1980, pp. 269-290.

Since some of these forces are excellent ones (and since the Soviets enjoy readiness, command and control, and other advantages accruing from the fact that these instruments of military power are centrally controlled and not subject to the same political constraints as are U.S. armed forces), countering the long-range Soviet strike problem may seem a very difficult one. Here, however, any long-range intervention-balance calculations must consider the aims of Soviet intervention. Should the USSR intervene solely to show force or to strengthen the resolve of a wavering client, it is probably the case that the USSR can deploy a sufficient initial increment to make good on their policy. Certainly their forces are sufficient for nearly all "showing the flag" requirements. In addition, as planners in the United States should know well, injecting a small "ship's company" of naval troops at just the right moment can make a big difference in third-world scenarios. In sum, there is no reason to doubt that should the USSR wish to insert a modest (but certainly dramatic) capability at nearly any distance from the USSR, they can do so.

Thus, the planning problem reverts to the twin considerations of Soviet objectives and the interests that a U.S. response would seek to protect. The capabilities of the corresponding U.S. contingency forces exceed those of their Soviet counterparts: the U.S. could probably defeat even the most ambitious long-range Soviet intervention. Clearly, the larger the Soviet intervention and the more competent its preplanning, the longer it would take to do the job. Other factors are salient also, such as the time it would take to marshal U.S. amphibious shipping, the availability of basing and overflight rights, and so on.[27] But in a race to establish conventional preeminence in areas

[27] Though U.S. logistics and lift capabilities probably are

beyond the Soviet periphery, the U.S. holds a decisive edge overall. Hence, the ultimate issue of countering sudden but small Soviet attacks is not one for the defense planner; it is one for political leaders. Soviet calculations, not to mention the outcome of the contingency will rest on our apparent willingness (not ability) to counter that action.

To the extent that the U.S. aim in this situation will be deterrence, we should posture our forces and demonstrate our capabilities appropriately. But the ultimate unknown in the deterrence equation will be the political uncertainties attached to current Soviet motivations to act. Consequently, the U.S. would be constrained by its knowledge that the USSR would, in accordance with the historic model of Soviet intervention conduct, only undertake such operations in conditions of extreme emergency. I noted above that the USSR would be most likely to undertake a major combat intervention if a prized ally was on the verge of disaster or unacceptable political realignment. The United States would have to recognize in advance that the USSR would be acting to support vital aims and design its response with that in mind. In short, it seems that we should rely on a carefully planned declaratory policy--given credence by our vastly superior low-level intervention forces--to deter casual Soviet aggression. But if the USSR does make such a move in the third world, we must suspect that the stakes to the Soviets are great and adjust our response accordingly.

It is likely under most plausible circumstances that some U.S.-Soviet condominium could ultimately be reached to sort out the

sufficient even under very austere conditions (at least in small formations), it would be important for training and other reasons to work out advance arrangements for staging, overflight, etc., if possible.

crisis, since the United States can without doubt destroy the ultimate viability of a Soviet remote intervention by depriving it of personnel and materiel support. The movement of even modest supporting lift is very difficult if the transportation and debarkation of the lift is opposed; and the USSR is greatly lacking in its ability to escort either naval or air resupply in combat conditions at least in the face of sophisticated opposition.

In sum, the United States, particularly through its carrier based air power, could accomplish its counter-intervention mission with relative ease and simultaneously defend itself against Soviet forces. Thus, skillful manipulation of U.S. threats could deter a sudden, remote intervention threat in advance, or if necessary, destroy the intervening force. The range of attractive options before the U.S. will depend on an unpredictable political situation; nonetheless, projected U.S. force capabilities will probably be sufficient to back up whatever action is chosen. It should be noted, however, that U.S. deployments (e.g., Marine Amphibious Units) and advance arrangements with local nations should be carefully tuned to the requirements of these contingencies. In other words, while new forces are not needed to meet this threat, responsive plans and other advance arrangements would be most helpful.

The second contingency is that in which the USSR mobilizes its intervention resources over a longer period. Here, interdiction operations may not be open to the U.S., as these could represent a casus belli. A number of Soviet options are possible here. The Soviets could, as we did in Vietnam, slowly deploy and enhance its capability. Similarly, it could (as it does in Libya now) predeploy large stockpiles in a "turn-key" fashion. Soviet forces could be flown under cover of

"strategic ambiguity" to break out the capability. In these and other cases, the USSR probably can pose a military threat that cannot be easily dealt with in short order by existing U.S. contingency forces.

Under these circumstances, however, the situation is not one of force planning--it is one of warning time. In a very long-haul mobilization race, the U.S. could begin to acquire the countervailing forces necessary to defeat the Soviet threat. The U.S. could even go so far (in extremis) as to add to the posture by calling up reserves (and perhaps even by beginning conscription). In prepositioning or other possible breakout cases, the U.S. may have the time to mount an effective counterforce. After all, once the decision to act has been reached, stocks can prove (as we now fear with POMCUS) very vulnerable. Under these circumstances, the rapid establishment of an off-shore, or better still, land-based, (including strategic bomber) tactical strike capability could frustrate Soviet plans. Thus, the United States has or could put in hand the capability to defeat and thereby deter Soviet interventions of this sort, if such a contingency seemed worth hedging against.

In sum, for either the massive, short-ranged invasion, or the smaller contingency threats, the U.S. now probably possesses the necessary deterrence capability. To enhance U.S. security in key regions and to deter Soviet attacks in advance, we must develop a new range of options as well as joint provisions with concerned local nations: these will require a major overhaul of the traditional U.S. approach to general purpose force planning (especially with regard to the priorities of U.S. interests). But the essential question that cannot be answered in advance concerns Soviet stakes and the Kremlin's

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perception of U.S. resolve. Here, we obviously have little control over Soviet actions in a crisis--we can only try to anticipate Soviet objectives in our planning calculus. Under the circumstances, probably the best we can do is to seek to avoid extreme escalatory provocations in this unsettling era of global "parity"--or worse. Similarly, by adapting U.S. declaratory statements to known patterns of Soviet intervention conduct, we can enhance peacetime deterrence.[28] In Southwest Asia, we need to change our posture and planning processes. In other cases, higher priorities have greater claim on our resources. In all cases, though, the military response plays (albeit a close) second to our political strategy in the third world.

[28] A number of additional points beg analytic attention. We need to be concerned with the prospect of the expansion of local conflicts, with alliance response to limited Soviet intervention, and so on. But these crucial points have received little attention so far, and conclusions on them await future study.

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4-84